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VOL. XXIV

MAY 1937 — APRIL 1938



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MAY 1937 TO APRIL 1938

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Advaita Vedanta, The Religion of—	
<i>By Prof. G. R. Malkani, M. A.</i> ...	290
Buddha, The—	
<i>By Prof. Dr. Henrich Zimmer</i> ...	18, 60, 105
Buddha, The Light of Asia	
<i>By Swami Vividishananda</i> ...	14
Buddha, The Social Reformer	
<i>By Bhikshu Gnyanapriya</i> ...	21
Divine Incarnation, The Doctrine of—	
<i>Editorial</i> ...	402
Durant Drake and Vedanta	
<i>By Anil Kumar Sarcar, M. A.</i> ...	457
Father Lallemant, The Spiritual Doctrine of—	
<i>By Wolfram H. Koch</i> ...	341
God or Man? God and Man? God in Man?	
<i>Editorial</i> ...	122
God, The Unseen Hand of—	
<i>By V. A. Suryanarayana, B. A.</i> ...	189
Hindu Ethics ...	1, 41, 81, 121, 161, 201, 241, 281, 321, 361, 401, 441
Holy Mother, Reminiscences of the—	
<i>By A. Disciple</i> ...	10, 49, 88, 168, 206, 287, 367, 447
India and China	
<i>By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh</i> ...	260
Indian Nationalism, The Spirit of—	
<i>Editorial</i> ...	322
Indian Philosophy, Present Tendencies in—	
<i>By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M. A., Ph. D.</i> ...	69
Justice and Law in Ancient India	
<i>By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M. A.</i> ...	310
Justice in Ancient India, Courts of—	
<i>By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M. A.</i> ...	475



Man's Last End, The Indian Doctrine of—			
<i>By Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy</i>	...	...	26
Man and the Universe			
<i>By Prof. Akshoy Kumar Banerjee, M. A.</i>	...	...	385
Maya, The Doctrine of—			
<i>By Dr. P. T. Raju, M. A., Ph. D., Sastri</i>	...	...	91
Meditations			
<i>By E. E. Speight</i>	...	...	461
Meditations: Conquest of Egoism			
<i>By Anilbaran Ray</i>	...	...	433
Mind, The Power of the—			
<i>By Swami Vividishananda</i>	...	...	305
Modern Thought and Vedanta			
<i>By Swami Pranaveshananda</i>	...	...	427, 468
Morality or Religion ?			
<i>By Prof. H. D. Bhattacharya, M. A., B. L., (P. R. S.)</i>	...	...	142, 185
Motherhood, The Glory of—			
<i>By Suresh Chandra Sengupta, M. A.</i>	...	...	63
Mount Kailas, the Symbol of Perfection			
<i>By Swami Chidbhavananda</i>	...	...	418
Narada Bhakti Sutras, The—			
<i>By Swami Thyagisananda</i>	...	113, 152, 192, 233, 312, 350, 392, 434	
New Lamps For Old			
<i>By C. R. Srinivasan</i>	...	...	415
News and Reports	...	38, 80, 119, 159, 198, 239, 280, 319, 356, 397, 440, 479	
Paradox			
<i>By E. E. Speight</i>	...	...	59
Personal and the Impersonal, The—			
<i>Editorial</i>	...	...	442
Ramakrishna Movement, The—			
<i>By Prof. D. S. Sarma, M. A.</i>	...	...	30
Ramavallabha Das, Saint—			
<i>By Prof. G. A. Chandavarkar, M. A.</i>	...	...	65
Ramavallabha Das, Sayings of Saint—			
<i>By G. A. Chandavarkar, M. A.</i>	...	...	237
Rammohan Ray: The World's Unborn Soul Come to Life			
<i>Dr. S. K. Maitra, M. A., Ph. D.</i>	...	...	298
Reason and Religion			
<i>By Prof. Rasvihari Das, M. A., Ph. D.</i>	...	...	209
Reason and Revelation			
<i>Editorial</i>	...	...	282
Recognition			
<i>By Prof. Ernest P. Horowitz</i>	...	...	276

## Religions, The Case for—

*Editorial* ... 42

## Religions, The Fellowship of—

*By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M. A., P. R. S., Ph. D.* ... 216

## Religion and Morality

*By Prof. Girindranarayana Mallick, M. A.* ... 300

## Religious Tendencies in India

*By Prof. Puntambekar, M. A., (Oxon,) Bar-at-Law* ... 180

## Ruysbroeck, Jan Van—

*By Wolfram H. Koch* ... 146

## Revelation, The true—

*Editorial* ... 82

## Reviews and Notices

... 77, 117, 158, 197, 237, 278,  
317, 354, 396, 437

## Science and Religion

*By Swami Asheshananda* ... 256

## Scientist and Seer

*By Sister Devamata* ... 348

## Silence, Power of—

*By Prof. S. R. Sarma, M. A.* ... 254

## Shiva in Madura Temple

*By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M. A.* ... 34

## Souls, The Transmigration of—

*By P. Nagaraja Rao, M. A.* ... 37

## Spinoza's Philosophy, Ethical side of—

*By Prof. Sheo Narayan Lal Srivastava, M. A.* ... 339

## Spiritual Aspirants, Hints for—

*By Swami Yatiswarananda* ... 52

## Spiritual Awakening in India

*By Sir Francis Younghusband* ... 331

## Spiritual Path, The—

*By Swami Yatiswarananda* ... 132

## Sri Madhva, The teachings of—

*By P. Nagaraja Rao, M. A.* ... 229

## Sri Rama, The Infinite Excellences of—

*By Dr. V. Raghavan, M. A., Ph. D.* ... 218, 270

## Sri Ramakrishna and the Divine Mother

*By K. Guru Dutt* ... 370

## Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

*By Nikolai Kazansakis* ... 138

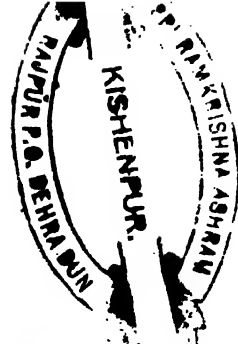
## Sri Vaishnava, Who is a true?—

*By A. Srinivasachariar, B. A., L. T.* ... 422, 464

## Suffering and Grace

*By R. Ramakrishnan, M. A., L. T.* ... 101

Superman, The Doctrine of—			
<i>Editorial</i> ...	...	...	362
Swami Ramakrishnananda, Reminiscences of—			
<i>By P. Manickaswami Mudaliar, B. A.</i> ...	...	...	128
Swami Shivananda, Conversations of—			
<i>By a Disciple</i> ...	...	...	247, 336, 408
Swami Vivekananda, Half-an-hour with—			
<i>By Prof. K. S. Ghosh, M. A.</i> ...	...	...	327
Symbolism: The Common Origin of Religion			
<i>By Adolphe Ferriere</i> ...	...	...	411
Tale, A—			
<i>By Jean Herbert</i> ...	...	...	100
Thou Art That			
<i>By Swami Prabhavananda</i> ...	...	...	171
Thought			
<i>By Prof. Nicholas Roerich</i> ...	...	...	178
Truth in Modern Europe			
<i>By V. Subramania Iyer</i> ...	...	...	377
Unity, The Christian Doctrine of—			
<i>By Mary Anita Ewer</i> ...	...	...	293
Unity, The Search for—			
<i>By Charles Baudouin</i> ...	...	...	250
Universal Religion, Can there be a?—			
<i>Editorial</i> ...	...	...	202
Universal Religion, True and False—			
<i>Editorial</i> ...	...	...	162
Universal Religion, What India can Contribute to—			
<i>Editorial</i> ...	...	...	242
Vedanta, Evolution and its purpose according to—			
<i>By Atmananda</i> ...	...	...	223
Vedanta Work in Central Europe			
<i>By Swami Yatiswarananda</i> ...	...	...	450
Way to the Divine, The—			
<i>By Swami Yatiswarananda</i> ...	...	...	380
Yoga, Bases of—			
<i>Editorial</i> ...	...	...	2
Yoga in the West			
<i>By F. B. Marsom</i> ...	...	...	212
Yoga to New Yorkers, Appeal of—			
<i>By Dorothy Kruger</i> ...	...	...	266
Yoga Vasishta, The Philosophy of—			
<i>By R. K. Valvekar, B. Sc.</i> ...	...	...	109



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## HINDU ETHICS

जपमावतंयन् नित्यं जपन् वै ब्रह्मचारिकं । तदर्थबुद्ध्या संयाति मनसा जापकः परम् ।  
विषयेभ्यो नमस्कुर्वीत् विषयान् न च भावयेत् । साम्यमुत्पाद्य मनसामनस्येव मनोदधत् ॥  
तद्विद्या ध्यायति ब्रह्म जपन् वै संहितां हितां । सन्यस्यत्यथवा तां वै समाधौ पर्यवस्थितः ॥  
यदन्यदुच्यते शुद्धं वेदस्मृत्युपपादितं । एतत् सर्वमशेषेण यद्योक्तं परिवर्तयेत् ॥  
यस्मिन्नेवाभिपतितं मनस्तत्र निवेशयेत् । शुद्धात्मा तपसा दान्तो निवृत्त द्वेषकामवान् ॥  
सत्यमभिपरीचारो विविक्तानां च सेवनं । ध्यानं तपो दमः क्षान्तिरनसूया मितशयनम् ॥

One should perform *Japa* (repetition of the Holy Text or Mantra), observing the vow of *Brahmacharya* (vow of purity and self-control in body and mind). The person who is thus engaged should also dwell carefully on the meaning of the Mantra. He should respectfully bow down to sense objects, and cease to think of them. By making the mind stay within itself, he should make it steady and peaceful. While repeating the auspicious Mantra (Gayatri), he should meditate on the Deity in his mind. These, however, may be given up when the mind gets absorbed in Samadhi. For *Japa*, even any other holy and suitable Mantra mentioned in the Vedas and Smritis would do, (not necessarily the Gayatri) : but one should repeat them fully, as given. One should train the mind to get absorbed in the object of contemplation, and for this one has to be pure in heart, self-controlled by austerity, and freed from anger and worldly desires. (Among the disciplines helpful to meditation are) truthfulness, worship of the holy fire, withdrawing into solitude, contemplation, austerity, self-control, patience, absence of jealousy and moderation in food.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva Ch. 194.

## BASES OF YOGA

[The following review is a brief summary of Sri Aurobindo's latest book, *Bases of Yoga*, published by the Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta. (Price Rs. 3. Pp. 251). The book is a compilation of extracts from letters written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in answer to their queries. They have been put together and arranged so as to be of some help to aspirants for the understanding and practice of the Yoga.]

### I

**I**N the first section entitled *Calm—Peace—Equality* is given a description of that attitude of mind which alone can form a secure foundation for spiritual life. The aspirant receives therein a warning against the all too frequent misconception that the essence of spiritual life consists in working up the emotions to a high pitch, in experiencing visions and voices, or in entering into trances that make one oblivious of things external. For the first thing needed in spiritual life is a firm *Adhara*, a secure foundation, into which the full downflow of Power and Ananda (Bliss) may take place. Only a mind established in equality, in a state of peace, calm, quiet and silence within, can become a receptacle capable of holding the higher experiences of the spirit. Without this peace and silence, spiritual experience, Knowledge, Power, Bliss and the like, even if they come, will not be permanent. They have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there. Moreover the experiences occurring in an unpurified and troubled consciousness are usually full of disorder and are of a mixed nature.

This silent and peaceful mind, which forms the only sound basis of Yoga, is not a state without mental

movements but one in which these movements appear only on the surface. One who is established in it stands observing these movements but not carried away by them, being able to watch and judge them, and reject all that has to be rejected, and accept all that is true consciousness and experience. Thus the calm mind is not the same as the vacant mind. The difference is this : “ .. when the mind is vacant, there is no thought, no conception, no mental action of any kind, except an essential perception of things without the formed idea ; but in the calm mind, it is the substance of the mental being that is still, so still that nothing disturbs it. If thoughts or activities come, they do not rise at all out of the mind, but they come from outside and cross the mind as a flight of birds crosses the sky in a windless air. It passes, disturbing nothing, leaving no trace. Even if a thousand images or the most violent events pass across it, the calm stillness remains as if the very texture of the mind were a substance of eternal and inscrutable peace. A mind that has achieved this calmness can begin to act, even intensely and powerfully, but it will keep its fundamental stillness—originating nothing from itself but receiving from Above and giving it a mental form without adding anything of its own, calmly, dispassionately, though with the joy of the Truth and

the happy power and light of its passage."

The test of this *samata* or equality has been described thus: "Whatever the unpleasantness of circumstances, however disagreeable the conduct of others, you must learn to receive them with a perfect calm and without any disturbing reaction. These things are the test of equality. It is easy to be calm and equal when things go well, and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect."

## II

The second section deals with the three important aspects of spiritual life, *Faith, Aspiration and Surrender*. Yoga demands a total dedication of the life to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever. To divide one's life between the Divine and some outward aim and activity that has nothing to do with the search for the Truth is inadmissible. Therefore all must proceed from the Truth once discovered and not from the lower mental or vital motives—from the Divine Will and not from the personal choice or preferences of the ego.

Before experience comes, one has to grasp, through faith, the truth of the Divine and the ideal of realising the Divine life even here as the aim of Yoga. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and Bhakti are at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender. Not to impose one's mind and vital will on the Divine but to receive His will and follow it, is

the true attitude of Sadhana. So faith, reliance upon the Divine, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable.

But the surrender to the Divine should not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements, or to one's ego, or to some force of ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine. To guard oneself against this self-deception, there are several rules to be remembered and observed. In the first place self-dedication must be accompanied with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of the Divine Truth. Next, it has to be remembered that turning all actions automatically into worship cannot be done by thought control only; there must be a strong aspiration in the heart which will bring about some realisation or feeling of the presence of the One to whom worship is offered. Again, a complete surrender is not possible in a short time. For to do this the ego has to be cut in each part of the being, and the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness have one after another to surrender separately, to give up their own way and accept the way of the Divine. Hence personal effort cannot be given up at once—nor is it desirable as it may lead to stagnation and inertia. It becomes possible only in the ultimate stages of Yoga. What one ought to do in the earlier stages—and for this, one has power at all times—is to call in more and more the Divine Power for guiding one's personal endeavour, to put the mental will or vital push at the service of the

Divine, rejecting what has to be rejected, opening oneself to the true Light and the true Force, calling it down quietly, steadfastly, without tiring, without depression, impatience, until one feels the Divine Force at work and the obstacles beginning to give way. Thus until the transfer is complete, there must be a personal contribution, a constant consent to the true Force, a constant rejection of any lower mixture. This is how personal effort is to be gradually transformed into a movement of the Divine Force, and in so doing the steadiness of aspiration and alertness of the discriminative sense are the most important factors that contribute towards success.

There are two ways of practising the Yoga. In the first, personal effort is prominent, and it is done by the action of a vigilant mind and vital seeing, observing, thinking and deciding what is or is not to be done. The other is that of opening all the stratas of one's being, mental, vital and the physical, receiving the Light, feeling and seeing it done by the Divine Force itself and helping constantly by its own vigilant and conscious ascent to, and call for, the divine working. Usually there cannot but be a mixture of these two ways until consciousness is ready to be entirely open, entirely submitted to the Divine's origination of all action. Hardly any one is strong enough to overcome the forces of the lower nature by the unaided aspiration. Even those who do it get only a certain kind of control, but not a complete mastery. Will and aspiration are needed to bring down the aid of the Divine Force and to keep the being on its side in its deal-

ings with the lower powers. The Divine Force fulfilling the spiritual will and the heart's psychic aspiration can alone bring about this conquest.

The one condition for receiving this divine aid is sincerity which results in the opening of one's being to the Mother's influence. To be entirely sincere means to desire the Divine Truth only. The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust to the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens, and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara. This Divine influence, to which the aspirant should open himself, is there above us, and if we can once become conscious of it, we have then to call it down into us. It descends into the mind and into the body as Peace, as a Light, as a Force that works, as the presence of the Divine with or without form, as Ananda. Before one has this consciousness, one has to have faith, and one should aspire for the opening. Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing, and are all effective; one can take the form that comes to one or is easiest to one. The other way is concentration; we may concentrate our consciousness in the heart (some do it in the head or above the head) and meditate on the Mother in the heart and call Her in there. One can do either or both at different times—whatever comes naturally to one, or one is moved to do at the moment.

### III

The third section entitled *In Difficulties* describes how an aspirant is

to face the difficulties that are incidental to spiritual life. While it is necessary to observe and reject the wrong movements in one, it is wrong for a spiritual aspirant to brood over sins and failures. The tendency to repine or fret at defects and failures springs from too much identification with lower nature. The Yogin should look on all the defects of the lower nature as movements of the lower Prakriti common to all, and reject them calmly, firmly and persistently with full confidence in the Divine Power—without weakness or depression or negligence, and without excitement, impatience or violence. By so detaching oneself from them, one finds these defects foreign to oneself, and more and more discovers one's inner being that is in contact with the Divine. Imperfection, even of a serious kind, is no bar to progress. The only bar that can be permanent is insincerity.

Even the action of hostile forces, which come as despondency, revolt, unbelief, difficulties, etc., have their due function in spiritual evolution. These are not merely tests to which the Divine puts us, but a compulsion on us to seek a greater strength, a more perfect self-knowledge, a more intense purity and force of aspiration, a faith that nothing can crush, a more powerful descent of the Divine grace. The Divine helps the aspirant, not tests him. The tests come from the forces of the lower plane; the Divine allows them, because they form a part of the soul's training.

Fruition of Yoga in its early stages is attended with great delay, because each part wants to go on with its old movement. Aspiration and patience have to be one's main sup-

port in this situation. Alternation of periods of dullness and brightness is the common experience of all spiritual aspirants. The chief reasons for the dullness of mind are that its basis is the physical mind having its support in Tamas or the principle of inertia, and that the vital is not actively supporting the Sadhana. Continuity of higher experiences cause a sense of exhaustion or reaction of uneasiness or dullness in the physical mind; for the human consciousness either cannot bear a constant descent of the Light or Power or Ananda, or cannot at once receive and absorb it. It needs periods of assimilation, but this assimilation goes on behind the veil of the surface consciousness; the experience or the realisation that has descended retires behind the veil and leaves this outer or surface consciousness to lie fallow and become ready for a new descent. When the fire of aspiration and inner Tapasya descends again and again with increasing force and magnitude into the darkness of human ignorance, it at first seems swallowed up and absorbed in the darkness, but more and more of the descent changes the darkness into light, the ignorance and unconsciousness of the human mind into spiritual consciousness. Another cause of depression is some strong habit formation of the mind or vital that is perhaps unwilling to change. When this occasional sinking of consciousness happens, the best thing to do is not to fret, not to despond, but to remain quiet, open oneself to the Mother, and call back the true conditions and aspire for a clear and undisturbed discrimination showing one from within oneself the cause of the thing that needs to be



set right. If one does so, the obstacle disappears quickly, and one finds a great progress has been made.

Three methods are suggested to overcome the difficulty of a wandering mind commonly experienced at the time of meditation. One is to observe the thoughts as they come in, without giving any sanction, until they run down and come to a standstill. Another is to stand back from thoughts as not one's own but things coming from outside, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space, with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. By following this method the mind divides into two—a part which is the mental witness, watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet, and a part which is the object of observation.

There is a third, an active method, by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from, and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as it were; if one can detect their coming, then, before they enter, they have to be thrown away altogether.

#### IV

The fourth section deals with the important subjects of *Desire, Food, and Sex*. Desires belong to the universal Prakriti. They come from outside, enter the sub-conscious vital, and rise to the surface. Ordinarily man does not know this, but feels the presence of desires only when they find a habitual harborage in the mind, and he thinks they are his. What belongs to the vital, what makes it responsible, is the habit of responding to the waves of desire that come from outside.

The necessities of a *Sadhaka* should be as few as possible. The body should neither be neglected, nor made much of; it should be treated as a means of Sadhana. Fasting, except for brief periods and even that occasionally, is discouraged. In the case of the strong it may give an inner state of energy and receptivity, but in the weak it leads to delusion and loss of balance. In neither case it has sufficient spiritual utility, as the higher energy and receptivity should come not by artificial or physical means but by intensity of the consciousness and strong will for Sadhana. Asceticism for its own sake has no place in the ideal of Yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are very important. The Yogic attitude consists in detachment and equality with regard to objects of desire, and not in forceful suppression. For, in forceful suppression, as in indulgence, the desire remains—in the latter case, fed by indulgence, in the former, latent and exasperated by suppression. It is only when one stands back with unmoved detachment, separates oneself from the lower vital, refusing to regard its desires and clamours as one's own, and cultivates an entire equality and equanimity in the consciousness with respect to them that the lower vital itself becomes gradually purified and also calm and equal.

The *Sadhaka* has to turn away entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse, for, if he does not conquer the sex-impulse there can be no settling in the body of the Divine consciousness and the Divine Ananda. Any form of love relation, or vital

interchange for mutual satisfaction of desire is prohibited for *Sadhakas*; this is especially bad when it takes the form of a sexual relation or a sexual enjoyment, even if kept free from any outward act. For the principle of Yoga is to turn one's love singly towards the Divine, to give oneself entirely to Him alone and nobody else. No error can be more perilous than to accept the intermixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it, and look on this as a part of the *Sadhana*. The attempt to treat sex activity by detachment without complete excision breaks down; the attempt to sublimate it, favoured by many modern mystics of Europe, is a most rash and perilous experiment. The medical theory that sexual abstinence leads to serious disorders is based on the false assumption that sex is a natural part of the human vital physical whole, a necessity like food and sleep. What is really harmful is sex suppressed in outward action but indulged in a kind of subtle vital way by imagination or by an invisible vital interchange of an occult kind. Even many medical men in Europe to-day admit that *Retas* which serves the sexual act is by abstinence changed into other element (Indian *Ojas*) which feeds the energies of the system.

As for the method of gaining mastery over the sex-impulse, it cannot be done by physical abstinence alone, nor by regarding it as something sinful and horrible. It can be done only through a process of combined detachment and rejection. By repeatedly standing back from the sex-impulse, as something alien thrown on consciousness by Nature-

force, and refusing assent to, and identification with it, one gradually succeeds in eliminating it first from the mind, then from the vital being and finally from the physical consciousness. This process continues until even the sub-conscious can no longer rouse it up in dream. The total elimination of the sex-impulse is one of the most difficult things in *Sadhana*, and it takes time to accomplish it.

Sexual attack in sleep comes through a mechanical habit in the sub-conscious, and is a sign of sexual desire suppressed in the waking mind and vital without being eliminated from the stuff of physical nature. The remedy for this is (i) to get the higher consciousness, its light and the workings of its power, down into the obscurer parts of the nature; (ii) to become progressively more conscious in sleep, with an inner consciousness which is aware of the working of the *Sadhana* in sleep or in waking, and (iii) to bring to bear the waking will and aspiration on the body in sleep. One way to do the last is to give before sleeping a strong and conscious suggestion to the body, preferably to the sexual centres, that the thing should not happen. Though the effect of it may not be immediate, it will prevail in the end.

## V

The fifth and the last section deals with a variety of interesting subjects—*Physical Consciousness, Sub-conscious, Sleep and Dream, and Illness*. It gives us a glimpse of the workings of man's psychological mechanism. For want of space, we shall note here only a few points. All attempts to unravel the lower nature

prematurely is discouraged, as it is likely to corrupt even the higher levels of being with its dirty stuff, for the sub-conscious in men is a diminished consciousness, and a refuge of all animal propensities denied expression at higher levels. The right method in spiritual life is to strengthen the higher regions, and then bring to bear its purity on the lower. Psycho-analysis is criticised on the ground that it does just the opposite of this ; for it rakes up the lower levels of being and brings its contents to the light of consciousness, but it knows nothing of the higher light and force without which the low tendencies held up for change cannot be overcome and transformed. The basic fallacy of psycho-analysis and of new psychology in general is its way of explaining the higher lights by the lower obscurities, the significance of the lotus by analysing the secrets of the mind from which it grows.

Illness is described as a deformation of the physical nature, just as lust, anger, jealousy, etc., are of vital nature ; and error etc., of mental nature. No doubt one must endure it with equanimity and patience when it comes, but it is not something to be accepted and enjoyed. Everything must be done to eliminate it, and even to secure complete immunity from it. All illness is described as entering the physical body only by passing through the subtle body, and it is suggested that an illness can therefore be prevented if one is conscious of the subtle body. By this method of self-defence a practical immunity from disease is envisaged. It is also hinted that even abso-

lute immunity is possible in what is described as supramentalised body.

## VI

Before we conclude, we shall advert to two ideas contained in the book, which we could not quite well follow, and which appears to us to be somewhat different from generally accepted notions of spiritual life. On page 93 we find the following remark about Samadhi : " Trance or *Samadhi* is a way of escape—the body is made quiet, the physical mind is in a state of torpor, the inner consciousness is left free to go on with its experiences. The disadvantage is that trance becomes indispensable and the problem of the waking consciousness is not solved, it remains imperfect." There are of course trances and trances. Many of them are spurious and are absolutely of no spiritual value. But the genuine trance or Samadhi does leave a permanent mark on the individual who experiences it. Accordingly Swami Vivekananda is once reported to have drawn the following distinction between sleep and Samadhi : sleep is a state of consciousness from which an ignorant man returns an ignorant man ; Samadhi is a state from which a person who entered into it ignorant, returns wise and illumined. Sri Ramakrishna's testimony also goes to show that it does transform the waking consciousness. He says : " To him alone who comes down from Samadhi to the plane of sense-consciousness is left a thin ego like a line (*Rekha*)—a length without breadth—just sufficient individuality to retain only the spiritual vision. This enables him to see Jiva and Jagat, as well as himself, as the One manifesting Himself

in these different forms. This vision of glory comes to the Vijnani who has realised the Nirakara Nirguna Brahman in Jada or Nirvikalpa Samadhi and also the Sakara Saguna Brahman in Chetana or Savikalpa Samadhi" (Sayings Pp. 98, Madras Edition). Hindu theology speaks of the Divine as both transcendent and immanent. It would seem that God as the transcendent is the experience of the mystic in Samadhi, and that God as the immanent is his perception of Him when he regains relative consciousness.

The other point we want to comment upon is the idea of making the body absolutely immune from illness. There are two extreme views in this country regarding the place of the body in spiritual life—one holding that a conscious neglect of it leading to its gradual decay is a part of spiritual discipline, and the other maintaining that a perfected spiritual life implies also the perfection of the body, including its immortality and freedom from disease. Now the unhealthy influence of both these extremes is obvious. Body is a means for a higher purpose, and whenever people have forgotten this, either through minimising its importance, or through elevating it to the dignity of one of the ends sought, the consequences have been undesirable. The neglect of it results in ruined health and the frustration of one's spiritual aim through sheer physical disabilities. The exaltation of it, as in the case of the Hatha Yogis and some of the Tantrics, ends in side-tracking the aspirant from the true road of the Spirit to unhealthy forms of psychism and exaggerated body consciousness. For this reason Sri Ramakrishna used

to deprecate Hatha Yoga and other allied schools of thought. We do not however imply by this that the system of Yoga taught in the present book has even the slightest resemblance to Hatha Yoga, or that it advocates any cult of body worship. The summary we have given above would show that it gives a very remarkable synthesis of all the highest spiritual traditions of India regarding Gnana (knowledge), Karma (work) and Bhakti (devotion), and that it declares in no uncertain terms the absolute necessity of a healthy spirit of dispassion and self-surrender for success in one's spiritual endeavours. The point we want to make out is only this: In spite of the high ideals and wise restrictions of a system of discipline, it is in danger of being misunderstood and misapplied by the common man when he hears of such an attractive promise as of making the body perfectly immune from disease. No doubt one who is already established in the spiritual ideal may undertake, if he thinks it necessary, to experiment on the transformations that can be wrought on the physical body and earth consciousness, by bringing the power and purity of the spirit to bear on them. Many spiritually enlightened persons may not care to do even this, as, say, in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. When asked to cure his ailing body by the power of his spiritualised mind, he declared that he could never think of directing, towards the body, the mind that had wholly and unreservedly been surrendered to the Divine Mother. This, however, may be a matter of temperament, and bold experiments in the realm of the Spirit, without any selfish consideration,

have their own place and justification. But we feel that matters of experiment, especially when there is every possibility of their being misunderstood and misapplied, are better not held forth before spiritual aspirants in general, lest it should turn to be dangerous knowledge in their hands. For the average spiritual aspirant, the safer way will be to do everything to keep the body in normal health, as one of the chief instruments of Sadhana, but not to expect anything more of it than what Nature has meant it to be.

These remarks are not in any way intended to minimise the great

spiritual value of the book. With its practical outlook, its synthetic note, and its sublime tone and diction, the book can be relied upon as a constant companion by all spiritual aspirants, both for inspiration in times of doubt and depression, and for wise guidance in the regulation of their daily life and spiritual endeavours. Its place is undoubtedly very high in the religious literature of the world. Spiritual aspirants all the world over will feel deeply indebted to the disciples who have given them the benefit of these valuable instructions, originally imparted to them by their Master for their own personal guidance.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**S**OME time after my acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna, I went to the temple-garden at Dakshineswar. I was in haste and therefore went without having taken my meal. On hearing this, Sri Ramakrishna said to me, "What a pity! You are starving; go to the Nahabat."\* That was my first meeting with the Holy Mother. The mother of Ram† and a few other women had seen the Holy Mother only once or

twice. They were there at that time. They told the Mother about my coming without taking food. The Holy Mother hastily gave me rice, *dal* and vegetables to eat. From the very first meeting, I became very intimate with her. Afterwards, when she was about to start for Kamarpukur to attend the marriage of Ram Lal Dada,‡ I went to see her at Dakshineswar. That I would not be able to see her for a long time made me extremely unhappy. She came to take leave of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master stood in the northern verandah of his room and the Mother

\* A building in the garden compound where the orchestra played, and where the Holy Mother lived, occupying a room there.

† A lay devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

‡ A nephew of Sri Ramakrishna.

touched his feet with her forehead. Sri Ramakrishna said, "Be careful during the trip. Don't leave anything in the boat or on the train." This was the first time I saw the Master and the Holy Mother together. It had been my desire to see them like that. The country boat started on its journey with the Mother. I gazed at it as long as I could see it. When the boat was out of sight, I returned to the Nahabat and wept for a long while, sitting on the place where she used to meditate. She used to sit for meditation on the western varandah of the Nahabat, facing the south. Sri Ramakrishna heard me weep. Then, after returning to his room, he sent for me. I came to his room and said, "You are very unhappy because of her going away, aren't you?" Then to divert my attention, as it were, he narrated to me the various spiritual exercises he practised at Dakshineswar. Then he warned me not to divulge these things to anybody else. That was the first day I sat very near the Master and talked to him intimately. All these days I felt hesitation because I was a shy young wife in a Hindu family. After about a year and a half, the Holy Mother returned to Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna had written to her that he had been experiencing great difficulty about his food. When she came back, the Master said to her, "That girl with the big eyes, who frequents this place, loves you very much. The day you left Dakshineswar she wept bitterly for you at the Nahabat." The Mother said, "Yes, her name is Yogen." Whenever I would go to Dakshineswar, the Mother would talk to me very freely

and ask my advice. I used to dress her hair. She liked my way of braiding so much that even after three or four days, at the time of bath, she would not wet her hair. She would say to others, "No, Yogen has made that braid. I will open it when she comes here." I used to go to the Master about once a week. When returning from Dakshineswar, I would take with me the green *bel* leaves for the worship of Shiva. Even when those leaves dried up, I would perform the worship with them. One day the Mother asked, "Yogen, do you worship Shiva with the dry *bel* leaves?" "Yes, Mother," said I, "but how did you know about it?" The Mother said in reply, "This morning I was meditating when I saw in the course of meditation that you were worshipping Shiva with dry *bel* leaves."

One day the Mother was preparing betel leaves. I was by her side. I saw her putting ordinary nuts and lime in some of the leaves, whereas in others she put some fragrant spices, like cardamon seed. I said to her, "Why have you not put cardamon seed in those leaves? Who will take these without spice, and who will take the others?" The Mother said, "Yogen, these leaves with the spice are for the devotees. I must make them my own through my attention and love. And the ordinary leaves are for the Master. He is already my own."

The Mother knew how to sing well. One day she and Lakshmi-didi were singing together in soft voices. They were absorbed in their music. Sri Ramakrishna heard them. Next day he said to them, "Yesterday you were singing. That is good."

At Dakshineswar the Mother had hardly any respite from work. She used to make bread from seven pounds of flour for the devotees, and prepare betel leaves without number. Then she used to boil milk for the Master for a long time, because he liked the thick cream. Further, she made curries for him. She used to take his food to his own room. As long as Sri Ramakrishna's mother was alive, he used to go to the Nahabat for his meals. After her passing away, he would eat in his own room. When the devotees were not around, the Holy Mother rubbed his body with oil before his bath. When Golap-Didi came to the Master, he asked her one day to bring the plate of rice. Since then, Golap-didi did it every day. The only time the Mother saw the Master daily was when she would take food for him to his room. But now that was all stopped. Golap-didi used to spend a long time in the evening with the Master. Sometimes she would return to the Nahabat at ten o'clock. The Mother would wait with Golap-didi's food in the Nahabat till late at night. That was very inconvenient. One day Sri Ramakrishna heard the Mother saying, "Let the dog or the cat spoil her food. I cannot guard it any more." Next day he said to Golap-didi, "You spend so much time here. That causes her inconvenience. She has to look after your food." Golap-didi said, "No, the Mother loves me really. She calls me by my first name, as if I were her own daughter." Golp-didi did not realise that the Mother was very sad because her intrusion took away the Mother's opportunity of seeing the

Master. But Sri Ramakrishna understood it clearly.

One day Golap-didi said to the Mother, "Mother, Monomohan's mother said, 'He is a man of such great renunciation, and the Holy Mother wears ear-rings and other gold ornaments. Does it look well?'" Next morning when I went to Dakshineswar, I saw the Mother with only two gold bracelets on her wrist. She had taken off all other ornaments. I was a little surprised and said to her, "What is this, Mother?" The Mother said in reply, "Why, did you not hear Golap saying yesterday..?" After my insistence, she put on the ear-rings and one or two ordinary ornaments. She did not put on all her ornaments any more, because immediately after, the Master became ill.

When the Mother first came to Dakshineswar, she was unfamiliar with worldly things, and she also had not experienced religious ecstasy. Though she practised meditation and Japam every day with utmost devotion, we did not hear of her going into Samadhi at that time. On the other hand, she would be frightened and worried to see Sri Ramakrishna's Samadhi. We heard from the Mother herself that when she had first come to Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna allowed her to stay with him.\* At that time, the Master and the Holy Mother used to spend the night in

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\* At one time Tota Puri said to Sri Ramakrishna, "What is the proof that you have conquered your physical passion. I should be convinced of it if you allow your wife to stay with you." Sri Ramakrishna, in order to test his own purity, slept with the Holy Mother, when she first came to Dakshineswar, for eight months in the same bed.

the same room. Sri Ramakrishna slept on the big bed, and the Holy Mother on the smaller one. She used to say, "Sri Ramakrishna used to be in spiritual ecstasy for the whole night. On that account I could not sleep at all. I would be terror-stricken and anxiously wait for the dawn. One night he did not come down to the ordinary plane of consciousness for a long time. I became very anxious and sent for Hriday through the maid-servant. He came to the room and whispered the name of God into the ears of the Master. That brought him down to ordinary consciousness. Next day Sri Ramakrishna taught me different sacred words which should be repeated in his ears for different kinds of ecstasy."

After I had been acquainted with the Mother for some time, she said to me one day, "Please tell him (the Master) that through his grace I may have a little ecstasy. On account of the constant presence of the devotees I hardly get any opportunity to speak to him about it myself."

I thought it was quite right, and I should carry out her request.

Next morning Sri Ramakrishna was seated on the bed alone when I went to his room, and after saluting him in the usual way, I communicated the Mother's prayer to him. He listened to it, but did not give any reply. Suddenly he became very serious. When he would be in that mood, no one would dare to utter a word before him. I sat there silently for a few minutes and then after saluting him, left the room. At the Nahabat I found the Mother engaged in her daily worship. Opening the door a little, I peeped in. She was giggling,—and next

moment she was weeping. This went on alternately for some time. Tears were falling down her cheeks in an unceasing stream. Spending some time in that way, she gradually became very quiet. I knew she was in Samadhi. At this, I closed the door and came away. After a long while I returned again to her room. The Mother said, "Have you just returned from the Master's room?" I said to her, "How is it, Mother, that you say that you never feel spiritual ecstasy?" She was abashed and began to smile. After that event, I used sometimes to spend the nights with the Mother at Dakshineswar. Though I wanted to sleep in a separate bed, she would never listen to it. She would drag me to her side. One night someone was playing on the flute. At that sound, the Mother went into Samadhi. She was laughing now and then. With great hesitation, I sat at one corner of the bed. I thought that being a worldly person, I should not touch her at that time. After a long while her mind came down from that state.

One day she was seated in meditation on the roof of Balaram Babu's house, when she went into the state of Samadhi. After regaining her ordinary consciousness, she said to me, "I found in that state, that I have travelled into a distant country. Everybody there was very affectionate to me. My beauty was beyond description. Sri Ramakrishna also was there. With great tenderness they made me sit by his side. I cannot describe to you the nature of that ecstasy. When my mind came down a little from that exalted mood, I saw my body lying there. I thought, 'How could I possibly enter into this



ugly body.' I could not at all persuade my mind to go into that body. After a long while, my mind entered into the body, and the body became conscious again."

One evening we — the Mother, Golap-didi and I—were meditating together, sitting on the roof of the house of Nilambar Babu, at Belur. After my meditation was over I looked at the Mother and found her seated in the same manner, transfixed in

meditation. Not a limb of her body was moving, and evidently her mind was in the ecstasy of Samadhi. After a long time she became conscious of the world again and began to say, "Oh, Yogen, where are my hands, where are my feet?" I pressed those two limbs and said, "Why, Mother, here are your hands and here are your feet." Still for a long time she did not become conscious of her physical body.

## BUDDHA THE LIGHT OF ASIA

*By Swami Vividishananda*

[Swami Vividishananda is the head of the Vedanta Centre of Washington, U.S.A. On the full moon of the month of May is the anniversary of the day which saw the birth, enlightenment and demise of the Buddha. The Swami's brief and impressive survey of the life and teachings of his is an appropriate tribute to the memory of the great one on this occasion.]

**B**UDDHA, rightly called the Light of Asia, was one of those blessed few who are born to bring peace and illumination to this suffering, benighted planet of ours. It was two thousand and five hundred years ago that Buddha saw the light of day, and it was Mother India who had the privilege of claiming him as one of her illustrious sons.

People in Europe and America knew very little of Buddha and his ethical religion. It was only lately, after the researches of the Oriental scholars and the writing of that monumental poem, "The Light of Asia" by Sir Edwin Arnold, depicting the life, character and teaching of Buddha, that the West became interested in the study of Buddhist literature. Yet we cannot deny the fact that the influence of Buddha and his gospel has been phenomenal.

To Buddha has been given a stupendous conquest of humanity, and

though he discountenanced ritual and declared himself to be only what every man might become, he has been accorded Divine worship. Four hundred and seventy millions of the human race are followers of Buddha, and his spiritual dominions extend from Nepal and Ceylon over the whole Asiatic eastern peninsula, to Tibet, China, Japan, Central Asia, Siberia and Swedish Lapland. Although India, the land of Buddha's birth, does not formally profess his religion, she has undoubtedly received the impress of his marvellous life and given him in her pantheon a place of supreme honour and adoration by recognising him as a divine incarnation.

The narrative of Buddha's life, so human and yet divine, has a fascination that is unequalled in religious history. Buddhist books, having many things which are beautiful and sublime, are not altogether free from

being discordant in details and contain exaggerations, interpolations and misconceptions, as all ancient books are. But they are unanimous in one point—in not writing anything—a single act or word, that would mar the purity and tenderness of the man.

Buddha, like all those great men who are worshipped as world teachers and saviours, was the embodiment of the time spirit. The peculiar degenerate condition of India in the sixth century before the Christian era necessitated badly a religious reformer of Buddha's type. The Hindu society, forgetting the lofty teachings of the Vedas, was ruled by priests who, without caring to live the life, were characterised by insincerity, hypocrisy, and tyranny. In the name of religion the people, following the footsteps of the leaders, practised meaningless rituals and cruel sacrifice, stained by the blood of innocent dumb animals. Chaos and confusion were rampant throughout the length and breadth of the country, calling for an immediate readjustment. At last the saving power of God manifested itself as Buddha—the reformer, the upholder of righteous living in place of the so-called social or scriptural authority, and the leveller of artificial distinctions. Apparently Buddha started his spiritual campaign as a rebel child of the mother Hindu church, but really speaking he came to fulfil and not to destroy.

Born in the year 620 B.C., at Kapilavastu on the borders of Nepal, India, in a royal family, Buddha was an unusual child, contemplative and serious, pondering on the deeper problems of life and showing an extraordinary compassion for all living

things. After his birth the astrologers and diviners came and predicted that the child reaching manhood would either renounce the world and bring deliverance to man by his wondrous wisdom, or, if he so chose, be a king of kings and rule this earth.

The parents, apprehending that they might lose their precious child, kept him in ignorance of the dark side of life, shutting from his view all that is sordid, ugly and painful. He was married and imprisoned in love's prison house—a walled place with palaces, gardens, fountains and natural scenery. Troops of charming women, besides his most loving wife, constantly waited upon him and tried to keep him cheerful.

In spite of all these attempts how could they hide from his eyes the thorns which grow upon the rose of life. Out to see this fair earth, he found nature in her naked form—a place seething with shameful and hideous conspiracy and warfare. He saw pleasure followed by pain, and death in the wake of life. Finally, it was the greatest shock of his life when he discovered that even man, supposed to be the crown and glory of creation, was not free from the ills of existence, being subject to old age, disease and death in addition to other weaknesses. The shock gave a decided turn to his life. Buddha, the prince, brought up in the lap of regal luxury and having all the promises of a reigning monarch, renounced the pleasures of life and his beloved ones, for the sake of truth.

The spiritual quest of Buddha, his wandering from place to place in search of teachers, his disappointment, his unaided effort to fathom the rid-

dle of existence, his hardship, privation and temptation, and his final illumination—is too long a story to be told here, but it is full of incidents which would serve as object lessons to humanity, encouraging, inspiring and comforting.

We shall narrate here an incident which marked the turning point of his life. Consumed by a burning desire for the realisation of Truth, Buddha gave himself up to ceaseless contemplation and meditation, denying himself even the bare physical necessities. In the enthusiasm of spiritual exercise sleep, food and rest were forgotten till his strong frame broke down under the pressure of exertion. Reduced to a skeleton, he was extremely weak and feeble, having not even the power to think. Not knowing what to do, he was almost ready to give up his attempt through depression and discouragement. A troupe of dancing girls was passing that way at the time, singing merrily as they played their guitar. Buddha listened. The song they sang perhaps did not mean much to them, but to Buddha it carried a message full of deep spiritual significance. The song was :

“Fair goes the dancing when the  
*sitar's* tuned,

Tune us the *sitar* neither low nor  
high,

And we will dance away the  
hearts of men.

The string o'erstretched breaks,  
and the music flies,

The string o'er slack is dumb,  
and music dies,

Tune us the *sitar* neither low nor  
high.”

Buddha realised that he should not overstrain his body in his spiritual

strivings, nor should he pamper it, for that would defeat its own purpose, and since then he adopted the golden mean or the middle path avoiding extremes.

He had his bath and was waiting for food, when Sujata, a woman of extreme piety and charm, came with a golden bowl of delicious pudding, made of the purest milk and honey and seasoned with spices, and fed him with great love and devotion. It brought strength and energy to Buddha's weak and emaciated body, and courage and determination to his drooping soul. He sat firm and determined under the famous Bo tree, and plunged himself into meditation, diving deep into his inner being, saying to himself : “Let my body dry up, my skin, bone and flesh go to rack and ruin ! Never shall I get up and move from this seat until I get the illumination I have been striving for all these years.”

Buddha's determination is unique in spiritual history. He was tempted in many ways by Mara, the personification of one's lower nature, but heroically he faced him and resisted all the allurements that were placed on his path. The victory came and along with it the long-sought-for illumination—the glory of Nirvana which passeth all understanding. Buddha the seeker became the illumined saviour and deliverer. His face was suffused with a divine radiance and his personality surcharged with a supernal joy and blessedness. In the tumult of this ecstatic experience he got up from his seat and danced around the Bo tree for seven consecutive days and nights, oblivious of the rest of the world. As he was coming down to the normal

plane, his heart was filled with supreme love and compassion, and with a desire to share this experience with humanity.

Buddha travelled all over India, spreading his gospel and making disciples, lay and monastic. Those who renounced the world formed the nucleus of the holy Order of monks founded by him. Pressed by the eager importunities of his aged parents and devoted wife, who were pining and languishing because of his absence, Buddha visited his native place and gave them the blessing of his teachings. Many of his relatives, including his wife and son, took refuge in the Order. A beautiful story connected with Buddha and his son which is told in Buddhist books deserves mention.

On the seventh day, after Buddha's arrival in Kapilavastu, his son Rahula, now seven years old, dressed in all the splendour of a prince, came to meet him. After due obeisance to his father, Rahula asked for his patrimony. Buddha blessed him and said: "My boy! Gold and silver and jewels are not in my possession. But if you are willing to receive spiritual treasures, and are strong enough to carry them and to keep them, I shall give you the Four Truths which will teach you the eightfold path of righteousness. Do you desire to be admitted to the brotherhood of those who devote their life to the culture of the mind, seeking for the highest bliss attainable?" Rahula replied with firmness, "Yes, father." And he was admitted into the Order.

Let us discuss briefly the Buddhist conception of Nirvana, which has

been wrongly identified with extinction or annihilation by many. Nirvana is not a negative state. On the contrary it is a positive experience—the fruit of a set form of spiritual exercise followed by desirelessness, freedom and illumination. It is similar to Samadhi—the mystic superconscious experience of the Vedantist, which has been described as beyond speech and thought. Buddha was silent on the existence of God and did not say much on what Nirvana meant. Asked by his foremost disciple Ananda, whether God existed or not, he evaded the issue. Buddha's rule was: "Live the life, and you will feel what God or Nirvana is. No use talking." Buddha was never an atheist or agnostic as has been mistakenly supposed.

In order to attain Nirvana, Buddha wanted his followers to be established in the four Noble Truths which are sorrow, sorrow's cause, sorrow's cessation, and the way to escape it. Buddha realised that the life we prize so much is one long-drawn sorrow. Only its pains abide. Its joys are as fleeting as drops of water on a lotus leaf. Who can ignore the pains of birth, youth, disease, old age and death? They are too real. The desire of enjoyment and clinging to life is sorrow's cause. If we can get rid of desire, there will be an end of our pain, and we shall have ever-lasting peace. For the attainment of peace which is identical with Nirvana, Buddha prescribed a way, the Noble Eightfold Path, a course of mental and spiritual discipline like right doctrine, right purpose, right discourse and so on. Nirvana is the birthright of

every man. Until he attains Nirvana he cannot have any freedom and will be born again and again, reaping the fruits of his good and bad deeds.

To conclude let us repeat the sacred formula :

Let us take refuge in Buddha—  
the Enlightened One.

Let us take refuge in Dharma—  
the Sacred Law.

Let us take refuge in Sangha—  
the Holy Order.

## THE BUDDHA

*By Prof. Dr. Henrich Zimmer*

[Dr. Zimmer is one of the well-known orientalists of Germany. The present article is a translation from the original German. We are indebted to Dr. V. N. Sharma, Ph.D., (Heidel) for the translation.]

**T**HE Buddhist monks of Ceylon tell us how according to their tradition the Order of the Buddha, the Awakened, originated. In His loneliness, sitting under the tree, night and morning, the princely Yogin had the great Awakening, after which He is known as the Buddha, the Awakened. His former being, the being of all creation—Gods and animals—lies now behind Him, like dream and night. Deeply fallen (merged) in Himself, He is bathing in the stream of His own Awakening. . . . . Thus the Lord remains seven days and nights, unmoved and untouched “expressing the bliss of the Awakening.” Then He rises so as to depart from this place, but he cannot : again He sits down under another tree, again for seven days and nights, penetrated into this stream of bliss of the Awakening. And likewise goes on into the same experience for a third time again for seven days. Then only He comes back to Himself slowly and the world He beholds now. His glorious glance falls on it, and turns back to His Awakening. He understands : What He experienced—one cannot teach it. All endeavours to talk about it, would be in

vain . . . . . From above, from the zenith of the Brahmananda—His eternal abode—Brahma, the Universal Spirit, beholds the Awakened, and watches His decision—a decision which is the outcome of His Awakening, and which, if seen with the eyes of the world is the Nirvana, the total extinction from all fleeting things of this side—the decision, to hide His Awakening before all creation. The Universal Spirit Brahma Himself is the highest creature : He is the source of Time and Space, of all Becoming. With the swiftness of the mind, He appears before the Awakened and implores Him to become the Teacher of Gods and men, yes, of the whole creation, which lies in the womb of the deep sleep, the dream of all dreams, otherwise known as Life. He asks the Awakened thus to unveil to all, the path of the Awakening. . . . In the midst of innumerable beings there might be some, whose eyes might not be so closed through the veil of passion of Life . . . these might be capable of understanding His world. Yes, there might be beings that might be matured enough to behold the rays of His glorious teaching, like lotus-flowers arising

from the depth of the lake, some having their buds still in the depth, others being nearer to the surface, some alone, unfolded and fully opened, moving and swimming in the presence of the sun unhindered. Thus, the Awakened takes His decision to unveil the path to the Awakening . . . . . Then disciples came, the Order and Tradition followed. Thus, He the Buddha, became the Teacher of the world. From the beginning the teaching of the Lord was meant only for the few. His message is never intended either to interfere, or change, or rule the destinies of the humanity. It might disappear in the throes of time and space, as we see in the Buddhistic tradition, unrealisable to the latter generations.

In contrast to the great preachers of the world—Homer in his sphere of the visible characteristic scenes, Zarathustra as the founder of the religious laws, Confucius who ordered and commented on the heredity of the decaying of the olden times, Jesus as the Harbinger of the happy message—the Indian prince of the Sakhya family, generally known as Sakhya Muni, is the embodiment of the highest silence, of taciturnity. Through the whole rich traditions of the Buddha, there is no word that can be doubtlessly said to be Buddha's. However, through the well-arranged speeches attributed to the Buddha, we get only a glance of the enlightened shade of a unique personality; nevertheless, we are brought to the surface of an atmosphere, which is unique in itself, and a similar of which one finds neither in India nor anywhere abroad. The path of the Buddha unveils no vision either of this world or of the other,

it starts no organisation for all. It is only meant for the few, to them only is the path unveiled. So the formulas, which can be understood, and by which one can stand firmly, are for the few.

However, there is one formula, which according to the Western conceptions is a creed, or a dogma. This compasses in itself four Noble Truths, and in them the last one unveils to us the Eight-fold Path of the Buddha. One has to understand this if one wants to behold the dynamic paradox of the living Buddhism, in spite of the great silence of the Buddha. Through the centuries in Asia, the message of the Buddha echoes in this. This creed and its dogmas remind us in Europe of some of our philosophical and religious experiences, and it is something new and unique to India, too, where these were presented five hundred years before Christ. There enters into this land, which was hitherto the treasure house of innumerable magical-religious riches, and which also appears as if it is a forest of metaphysical-speculative systems, a new path, the path of the Buddha, which has presented a new process of healing; a therapy now enters the arena by the side of the traditional wisdom which bestowed on men the glory of the divinity, and by the side of the traditional knowledge which unveiled the magical powers, and teaches all why one is in this world, and what one can be in the future worlds.

Unlike Spinoza, who in his contemplative thought follows a geometrical system, Buddha speaks in a practical manner like a medical man. He makes men transcend from this world where they live. As an Indian

physician, the Buddha puts forth four significant Truths (Dharma)—the first of which is that men are not healthy because they are carrying heavy burdens of sorrow on their shoulders. The Buddha diagnoses these prudently without any question of guilt, without any pathos of metaphysical sources. What is this suffering of man?—this does not teach us any speculation, does not entangle us into any excavation of thought, but makes one to penetrate into that glance of life which transcends our conditioned being. Through this glance one can know that the cause and the symptoms of the suffering are the same, even though one suffers now or suffered in the past. These alone form his nature, and create the atmosphere around him. The second Truth is that the nature of his suffering state is surmounted with a chain, which is full of causes and symptoms of suffering. This alone forms the quintessence of our earthly life, our conventionally lived life, whether we acknowledge them as sufferings or not. The Buddha looks at many in this respect, somewhat like a psycho-therapist that looks at his patient who thinks that he is healthy, though the physician recognises all the symptoms of his sorrows and embarrassments from within and without, and thus recognises the critical case of the patient.

The origin of this life, diagnosed as a painful one, is nothing but ignorance; it is non-knowledge. Not-knowing—better is this; it is somewhat like looking at oneself with the eyes of the child. Ignorance is therefore a natural function, but not

necessarily an indispensable one. Hence we do not know that we move in a world of conventions in which we feel, in which we think and act. Nevertheless the conventions are there, but they are not the highest reality, for, they are human creations, conventions between the world and the I. Conventions might change in their conceptions from time to time, their aspects might undergo many a change in the course of history. Hence they are conventions that are universal, touching only the surface of the creation, from the animals to the Gods in their heavens. So ignorance accepts them as such, with all their contents as real existing ones.

On this ignorance depends all other symptoms, all the incidents and situations of life. The timeless Becoming of nature in which we live, is beyond birth and death. All the happenings in which we live, grow and act depend on this spontaneous push of our innermost Being to the outer world with all our senses and perceptions. The contact of the soul with that domain of form and name is the outcome of this. All our unconscious desires and wishes which emanate from us, move around us in the shape of choice and deed, and in which life transcends the limitations of the present, form the fundamental background of our being, of our heredity. This alone expresses itself in preconceptions and inclinations, in our dreams in very often repeated pictures of our destiny. Therefore, the whole content of our spontaneous life is according to the Buddhist diagnosis pathological. It is a state of suffering which can be perhaps cured.

*(To be continued)*

# BUDDHA THE SOCIAL REFORMER

*By Bhikshu Gnyanapriya*

[Bhikshu Gnyanapriya is a Buddhist monk of German nationality. In the following article he clears the common misapprehension that the Buddha's message had no reference to the life of man in this world. He points out how the Buddha had a deep psychological insight into the needs of men and societies, and how his message is the source of gospels of social amelioration.]

UR subject brings us to the question as to whether Buddhism as a religion can be said to have been essentially swayed by monastic ideals, and if it is so, whether we can say that its ethics is anti-social? There are many who feel, nevertheless, that the spontaneous renunciation and right overcoming of the world by those who take to the life of asceticism are perfectly justifiable, provided the vocation be real. It is further positively advantageous to the community, socially and morally, that a number of its finest minds should lead a life that may be called in a certain sense 'sheltered.' It would neither be fair nor plausible to characterise the true Buddhist morality as a thoroughgoing monasticism or as a doctrine of self-salvation. The Holy Order of the early Bhikshus was formed by fostering cosmic sympathy "for the sake of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good and the gain of gods and men."

The noble Buddhist path is the middle path between asceticism and laxity, also between the extremes of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva ideals. It is integration into a single ideal of highest spiritual perfection. The noble Sakyamuni, who was never and by no means a 'monkish' seclusionist, generally deprecates, and in cases even forbids, penance on the one

hand and indulgence in sensuous pleasures on the other, and recommends "the fasting of the heart" as conducive to illumination. Like the Hellen Aristotle, Bhagavan Buddha has enjoined the golden Middle Path, combining harmoniously a dynamic sort of moderate asceticism as a preparation to the luminous and unique experience of perfect Self-realisation and salvation. The sublime example of wise asceticism in the life of innumerable monks must have provided in the society a useful corrective to luxury and haughty selfishness.

The typical Yogi and Sadhu who has renounced the world and established universal harmony is saved from the torment of separateness which is the basis of the illusory life; he has already done his work, and is ahead of the times. The real hermit and the saint, the Buddhas, Christs and Ramakrishnas of this world, are the brilliant pillars of strength and good hope on which this unsaved world stands. The mere fact of their breathing the same atmosphere in which we breath is a benediction and an inestimable benefit unto us.

Some years ago, Mr. K. J. Saunders in his Message of Gotama Buddha, published in the Heritage of India Series, observed: "Gotama was not a social reformer except in the secondary, subordinate sense which is true of all religious and moral

52849



teachers ; he is said, in fact, to have warned some of his monks to avoid the example of certain heretics who acted also as physicians. Their task was to administer a moral tonic : let them see to it." You will recall in this context the beautiful episode of Kish-gotami whose baby had just died. This is just an outline of it. The villagers tell Gotami that only the Great Sage on the hill can do anything for her child, and she goes to the Compassionate One. He does not tell her that He cannot restore the child to life ; that would have been too much a heavy blow to the poor, afflicted lady who had fixed her last hope on Him. But He sympathises with her, and puts her in the way of learning that death and evanescence of the little, conscious self is the common lot of all, and that by establishing universal harmony and intuitive unity one could attain direct experience and knowledge of the voidness of all transeient things, and thereby get enlightenment and everlasting Bliss. This unique knowledge of enlightennment and deliverance would not be accepted by the English poet who wrote : "That loss is common does not make mine own less severe, rather more." But the mind and the deeper wisdom of the eastern man, especially of the Indian, is cast in a different mould ; it goes right into and penetrates the very bottom of Ultimate Reality.

If by "social reformer" is meant one who puts forward a programme, forms an association, collects funds, prints treatises, delivers lectures, discusses and employs agents to carry on a propaganda, Gotama, the Sakya-muni was not certainly a social reformer. As I take it, however, the

person who does all this, is "the social reformer" in the secondary sense. He is a very necessary person in the social economy ; but his utility and value entirely depends upon the "social reformer" in the primary and proper sense, that is, the man who diagnoses the social diseases and troubles correctly, and prescribes the true specific for the malady. With an only symptomatic manner of treatment he is dissatisfied. The former kind of "social reformer" is to this latter kind, what the chemist who makes and distributes medicines is to the doctor who examines thoroughly the patient and writes out the prescription. The modern notion favours institutional methods—that is to say, whenever there is an evil to be cured, society gets together a number of people and starts an organisation to combat it through the working of a programme. In the case of the more serious ills, the State is expected to take up the work. Social philosophers like Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill objected to State legislation and intervention in social matters on the ground that it weakened individual responsibility. But they did not oppose voluntary organisations.

The constant tendency in all social organisations and associations for machine methods and mechanisation, the tendency to eliminate altogether the human touch, the living, responsible man, nay, to violate him, has often enough called forth strong protests from the masses as well as the best persons in the society. To take one instance, Madame Montessori in her book on education severely criticises modern orphanages as utterly useless for the ideal which they are

intended to fulfil. Great Teachers like Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna were not against organisations as such, but they attached greater importance to the fundamental human factor. To them organisation was strictly subservient to the human heart in all matters. It will be wrong to deny on that account alone the title of "social reformer" to the great luminaries, from whom all other reformers, innovators, and theorists who have worked for the people's happiness have lit their little lamps.

The fully Enlightened One differed from the Hindu philosophers and teachers of His time only in the intensely practical spirit in which he conceived His high mission. Having tried all the traditional methods and systems and failed to attain the highest goal, He discovered a practical method of His own, and at once set about to proclaim and demonstrate it to all mankind in a simple way. His way and experience went far beyond the limited intellect, its fruitless controversies and its snobbish knowledge of the superficial purely practical aspect of life. He was sure that by following earnestly His way, every one could attain the highest peace of mind and the great silence of the Eternal Bliss which He Himself had attained by straining every nerve. He did not overlook the need of organisations. In fact, He was perhaps the first great organiser in history. He formed His organisation, but showed how the fabric of society was based on morality and inner purity. He took care that every one who formed it had qualified himself for the task and mission of human regeneration by a strict course of study and discipline. Man is not

purely a social being but a psychological being as well ; complete self-realisation of Noble Wisdom and Love requires increased self-responsibility and dynamic spiritual energy. For life is in wholeness, while pure analysis is death. The true, whole man, with his inmost cosmic tendencies, is more and greater than an 'unrelated atom' in terms of which the sterile pedantry and individualistic, false monasticism of some Theravada Buddhists would conceive him to be. The living man is man-in-the-universe, microcosm and macrocosm, Man and God and Destiny together as one and the same.

If the Tathagata prohibited His disciples from curing diseases or working miracles, it was because their doing so would have distracted public attention from His central teaching, which consisted in self-reliance and self-aid as the sole efficient way to final salvation. This teaching lay wholly in the power of man. That the Buddha's message of light and freedom did not prohibit the cure of disease is seen by the fact that the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka built hospitals for men and even for animals throughout his vast empire. The central idea of the Lord Buddha's teaching is that really all evil is of moral and mental origin, and that the remedy of it has to be sought in a complete renovation and harmonising of the mind and heart. Modern doctors and scientists have demonstrated that germs of disease are born of evil passions and unwholesome states of mind. However that may be, mind-cures which were once laughed at are now accepted not only as possible but as actual facts. The Blessed One was a reformer, religi-

ous, social and even political, but His peculiar manner was that of appeal to the human mind and heart, to the whole living man.

Frontal attacks are now recognised as ineffective and detrimental in dealing with bad habits and social evils. "The expansive power of a new and living affection" and a positive attitude are the most potent agents in removing an old unhealthy habit, and they are the essential elements in every successful life. If you want to cure a drunkard of his vicious craving, open attractive temperance hotels and homesteads in the neighbourhood. We need must love the highest when we see it, as George Elliot wrote; but people to whom the opportunity of higher pleasures and noble beauty are denied, perforce will sink back into lower ones. If you want to get rid of a bad thought, the best way to do it is to hold steadfastly before your mind a pure idea. The highest impulse of the subjective self is to express itself in consciousness. It will express itself intuitively to its full capacity if freedom of action is allowed. The perfectly Awakened One systematically acted upon these very modern maxims during His life-time.

Take His way of dealing with the elegant courtesan, Ambapali. Jesus Christ, in a similar situation, reprimanded the men who accused the woman taken in adultery, and bade her go and sin no more. We feel, as we would if we had known her subsequent life personally, that the young woman turned over a new leaf of life after that meeting with the Master. But I venture to think that the Lord Buddha was a greater psychologist, and that His manner of treatment,

while equally effective, was even better. He received the worldly-minded Ambapali just as courteously and trustfully as the Licchavi who called upon Him immediately after. He made no reference whatever to her moral conduct, and for the moment, made her forget all about it. He accepted her invitation to meals with the same gracious politeness as He would accept that of a King or Emperor. Yet He knew everything about her; but His object was merely to put His trust in her and make her cast the past out of her mind and soul completely. And when we read that at the end of the repast He accepted Ambapali's gift of the house for His community, He felt, and we feel sure, that Ambapali had renounced her manner of living for ever. The same master touch is seen in the treatment of the returned prodigal son in Buddha's parable. In Christ's parable, the father is so immoderate in his touching instances of the love and joy as to make his dutiful elder son justly jealous of the treatment accorded to the returned squanderer. But the Blessed One is ever sensitive to, and careful of, moral values and emotions. The father in His parable does not betray his feelings, but with true regard for his son's permanent well-being, little by little prepares and disposes him for the final reunion. The moral is drawn: "By steps must the minds of men be trained for higher truths and states and brought to maturity".

That was the Buddha's unique method of social reform. He created for the human society and its conditions of life a new fertile and vigorous foundation, and threw open the gates of Immortality. Everybody

can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who really finds a way out of the difficulty. The first duty is to train and educate the people on national lines through national manner, as far as practicable, and to lead them to the eternal sources of power which lies in their own infinite and inmost nature. The peerless Master did not refuse to have intercourse with any person or institution, however erring in its ways. He probed to its root, found the evil principle and put a good principle in its place, firmly confident that the power of the good and positive must ever overcome evil.

His method is a priceless heritage to humanity. It is one which seeks to harmonise the inner life with outer life, one which tries to combine knowledge (Arhat) with love and compassion (Bodhisattva). But it requires time and patience to master. It is a way of spiritual dynamism which gives lasting results, and what is more, it is entirely free from untoward reactions of any kind. There is a rich store of helpful examples in the glorious life of the Enlightened One and in his lucid teachings which are of infinite use to us in solving our modern problems.

But India and the Buddhist countries of the East, too,—I think in particular of Ceylon—have to be aware of, and to remember vividly, their

precious treasure of the Three Jewels—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. They should also be aware of “Nobless oblige” and “Example is better than bare theory and doctrine.” Are we able to say with confidence to the world: “Look at us. See what the eternal Dharma, the universal message of Light and Freedom has done for us. Accept it, and your people will be the same”. If a gift should be fully and frankly appreciated, it must obviously have proved itself to be a benediction to the giver.

The glorious lotus, bathed in golden sunlight that adorns itself, adorns the shining pond. People from afar in the West will come to see that attractive fragrant water-lily, to beg for slips and seeds, that their lakes and countries too may be adorned. Let us then trim our divine flower of Dharma and Truth, and the world enthralled by its sweetness will appreciate it enough. Yielding to the sweet, contagious influence of the Dharma, cherishing its true Oneness, All-inclusive Beauty and Perfectness, we will be radiant with its brilliant Light, Spirit and Love. For only the Sangha, the Community of fervent followers who realise the universal Dharma, Truth and Compassion will move their own nation and make even other nations follow its noble steps.



# THE INDIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN'S LAST END

*By Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy*

[Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy points out herein that there is no fundamental difference between Hinduism and Christianity in regard to the conception of man's Last End (Moksha).]

**T**HE religion of India is known as Hinduism or Brahmanism. Of this religion, Buddhism was a variant, related to Hinduism in the same way that Protestantism was related to Catholicism.

When the religion of India was first examined by Europeans, and mainly by Christian missionaries, nothing but a difference between Christianity and Hinduism could be seen ; because no one wished to recognise anything but difference. We know now that the parallels between Christianity and Hinduism are so many, so close, and often so verbally exact, that we can only consider that both are dialects of one and the same spiritual language ; only this distinction remaining, that in Christianity the major emphasis is devotional and ethical, in Hinduism metaphysical and intellectual. If we consider only mediæval Christianity, or Catholic doctrine, even this distinction partly disappears.

Very many misconceptions of Indian religion still persist, even in scholarly circles. Hinduism, for example, is described as a polytheism, but is no more polytheistic than Christianity, in which connection one may be surprised to learn that no less an authority than St. Thomas Aquinas affirms that "We cannot say *the only God* for deity is common to several" (S. Th. 1:31:2). And just as the Muhammadans have mistakenly

regarded Christianity as a polytheism, so Christians have been mistaken in calling Hinduism a polytheism, the fact being that neither Christianity nor Hinduism are polytheistic, though both are polynominal ; an infinity of designations of the First Principle being in fact inevitable, precisely because of Its infinite variety and omnimodality when regarded from our point of view, however perfectly simple and one and the same It may be in Itself.

In the same way Hinduism has often been called a pantheistic faith ; pantheism being the doctrine that everything is God, and God identical with all things and *not* at the same time infinitely more than all things. In fact, however, this doctrine is constantly and emphatically repudiated in Hinduism by repeated affirmations both of immanence and of transcendence, and by a repeated distinction of the finite and intelligible from the infinite and unintelligible aspects of Deity. The Hindu and Christian traditions, indeed, both alike employ the complementary ways "of affirmation" and "of negation" side by side : on the one hand describing the Deity according to His powers or acts, or manifestations of omnipresence, and on the other declaring that "Nothing true can be said of God", that whatever can be said is inadequate, or even a distortion, and hence the famous phrase of the Upanishads, "No ! No !"

At the same time we meet with repeated assertions of the identity, not indeed of the empirical ego, but of the real and innermost self of man with the Divine Essence, in equally famous *logoi* such as "That art thou", and "It is only by becoming God that one can truly worship Him." That brings us directly face to face with the problem to be discussed here, of what is really meant by the Hindu doctrine of "deification", and the question, whether or not the Indian "deification" differs from the Christian "deification", as understood for example by St. Bernard or by Meister Eckhart.

There can be no question but that from the Hindu point of view, man's last end and beatitude are only realised when he no longer knows of any distinction between "himself" and the Spirit of God; just as, to employ a simile common to Ruysbroeck and the Upanishads, when rivers reach the sea, their individuality is confused with that of the sea, and we can only speak of "sea".

If Christianity seems on the other hand to maintain an eternal distinction of the creature from the Creator, we shall have to ask whether or not this apparent contradiction is a real one, or whether the Hindu "deification" and that of the Christian mystics (who have also been accused of pantheism) do not by their insistence on a total abandonment of self as an indispensable condition imply precisely that very distinction of creature from Creator, and of finite from Infinite, which is not merely an orthodox Christian doctrine, but one that is metaphysically unimpeachable and universally valid. It is with the immortality of the soul

that we are concerned with; whether such an immortality is possible, and what is more important, whether or not an immortality of the soul, if such a thing be possible, can be regarded as in any way compatible with man's last end of deification and perfect beatitude.

Hindu and Christian doctrine agree in making the Messiah and Avatar, the universal Man and Son of Man, the only doorway through which one can be enlarged from this created world of birth and death, change and decay, into that uncreated world of light and immortality, from our present experience of past and future into that eternal now without duration. It is with reference to that great transition that Christ says, "He that would save his life, let him lose it": and indeed as Eckhart exclaims, "The soul must put itself to death.....All scripture cries aloud for freedom from self". This "freedom from the self" means very much more than our ethical "unselfishness"; it means a liberation from the whole idea of "I and mine", from all attachment to the notion of an independent private essence, whether of soul or body; and a liberation from all attachment to any such "survival of personality" as spiritualists have confused with immortality in the orthodox and strictly spiritual sense of the word.

That messianic and solar door by which one passes out of this imperfect world into that state of glory which, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, "is not under the sun", is a strait gate, and even a closed door for those who are not qualified to pass through it; that is, the way is impassable for those in whom there

remains the smallest trace of self-hood, whether physical or psychic. To "win beyond the Sun" one must have abandoned all possessions, whether of body or soul; those who are qualified to enter in are described as "unified," in distinction from all that remains without, in multiplicity. The gates of Paradise are guarded by the Angel with the Flaming Sword, and it is precisely in the same way that in the Indian texts the way in is described as covered over, concealed, and defended by rays of light, by which external manifestations the way is barred against all who are agnostic of God. It is only for one transformed by the Gnosis of God that the rays are withdrawn, and an open road is seen, coincident with what is called in Hinduism the "Pre-eminent Ray", and in Christianity the "Dark Ray", because it is not outwardly visible, but strikes into the Divine Darkness, where no sun shines, but only the Spirit that is called alike in Hinduism and Christianity the "Light of lights", and alternatively a "Darkness" or "Lightning" as being "blinding by excess of light".

In Indian scriptures the qualification of one who is enabled to pass through the Sun and enter into the Godhead "as milk might be poured into milk" are primarily those of Truth and Anonymity. It is as "one whose nature is the Truth" that one approaches the Sun, who "is the Truth"; and being of the same quality, cannot be denied. Or it is as one who in answer to the question "Who art thou?" can say "Who I am, that is the Light, Thyself," and is then bidden "Enter thou; for what I am, thou art, and what thou art, I

am." But if he should answer either by his own or by a family name, the would-be entrant is dragged away by the factors of Time. For as another text expresses it, "God has not come from anywhere, nor has He become anyone": and the conclusion inevitably follows that no one can return to God as like to like who still is anyone.

In the same way one who reaches the end of the road and enters into God must leave behind him the whole burden of his deeds, whether good or evil. For these are the basis of "character", and nothing characteristic can enter into the uncharacterised Deity, "Whose only idiosyncrasy is being." There, as Meister Eckhart says, "Neither vice nor virtue ever entered in," or, as the Upanishad expresses it, "Neither vice nor virtue can pass over that Bridge of the Spirit which is the only link between this world and that." In the words of Damascene, "He Who Is, is the principle of the names applied to God;" and the Upanishad, "He is, by that alone can He be apprehended." It is not then by works or merit that a man is qualified to attain to the perfection of happiness, but only by an absolute Knowledge and Love of God; an absolute Knowledge or love of anything implying, of course, a perfect sameness of knower and known, lover and beloved.

We are now in a position to reconcile the Christian mystic and Indian metaphysical concepts of "deification" with the admittedly true doctrine that nothing finite can enter into the Infinite as like to like. Equally from the Christian and the Hindu standpoint the constitution of man is triple, a constitution, *viz.*, of body,

soul, and spirit ; Sanskrit *rupa, nama, atman*; Arabic, *badan, nafs, rich*. The Christian soul (anima, psyche) is no less than the body a created and mutable thing, and hence, in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, "To say that the soul is of the Divine Substance involves a manifest improbability" (STh. 1:90:1). If then the soul, although begun in time, and being one amongst others, is nevertheless sometimes spoken of as becoming immortal, we must not overlook that this transformation is only accomplished by its own "last death," nor overlook that it is only as "no thing" and "no one" that it can enter into God, who is assuredly no thing, nor any one amongst others.

The consciousness of a man can be centred in his body, and this is the animal man ; or in the soul, and this is the psychic man ; or in the spirit, which is the spiritual or pneumatic man. It is the latter alone that can "return" to God in likeness of nature. Nor is this last end of man merely a matter of *post mortem* destiny : for "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," or as the Upanishad expresses it, "The inconceivable form of Deity, farther than far away, and also here within you, though It cannot be seen by the eye's intrinsic faculty, can be apprehended by Truth, and can be seen by the illuminated Gnostic, where It indwells the secret chamber of the heart." And just as Indian teachings acknowledge the possibility of a liberation realised here and now, so as Augustine puts it, "Insofar as we are thinking of eternal things, we are participating in eternity," and we must confess with Behmen that at death "The

soul goes nowhere where it is not already."

Thus neither Indian nor Christian "deification," man's last end, implies any such doctrine as that the finite and variable individuality of man can assume the infinite and immutable being of God. Deification is a reunion, often described as a marriage, of the immanent with the transcendent Spirit. Not that these two have ever been divided, otherwise than in terms of the human logic by which our own limited individualities are sustained ; for the Spirit is impartial. To be deified is "werden was du bist" ; it is only when the Identity is thought as a condition to be "some day" realised, and speaking in an all-too-human language, that we call the Gnosis a re-union and speak of those who realise it as "Perfections," as though they had been somewhere or had been any less than perfect. Actually, as Eckhart says, "When I enter there, no one will ask me whence I came or whither I went." For the individual principle is only "not yet" risen, only "not yet" at home, insofar as it conceives itself in time and as a prodigal son ; as it is in God, it has never fallen, never been estranged. Because in God there can be no distinction of ideas from the intellect that entertains them ; it is only "as if" that one can speak of the *imago imaginata* as "returning to" or "becoming" the *imago imaginans*, in which it already exists "more eminently."

The Hindu "deification," then, is precisely what is meant when we are commanded "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect" and meant by St. Paul when



he says that "Whoever is joined unto the Lord is One Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). A fundamental distinction of Hinduism from Christianity is thus impossible ; to draw a distinction is to divide the Truth against itself.

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

*By Prof. D. S. Sarma, M.A.*

[As the author of the *Primer of Hinduism* and other popular and thoughtful works, and as one of the most successful translators of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the name of Mr. D. S. Sarma, Principal of Rajahmundry College, is well known to modern students of Hinduism. In the following article, which forms the substance of a lecture delivered at the Hindu Samaj, he gives a critical appreciation of the Ramakrishna Movement, bringing out its significance and possibilities for modern India and the world at large.

With reference to the writer's remark towards the end of the article regarding the relative importance of social service and spiritual practice in the Ramakrishna Math, we wish to make one point clear. To the followers of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda work and worship are only two forms in Sadhana. So it may be said that the Ramakrishna Maths are devoted wholly to spiritual practice, and the work they undertake only forms one aspect of spiritual discipline.]

52849

**I**T can never be too often repeated that Sri Ramakrishna is the starting point of the present Indian Renaissance. The movement that goes by his name is more representative of the Hindu religious spirit than any other movement of modern times. It has successfully avoided the pitfalls that lie in the path of the religious movements started by a subject nation. India has been conquered by nations who profess, and profess with great zeal and intolerance, theistical religions of an aggressive type. And so our tendency as a subject nation has been, especially in the last century, to exalt an imitative and alien type of theism at the expense of other, and what we generally regard as higher elements in our religion. All our theistical movements of modern times may be regarded, therefore, as the tribute we have paid to our conquerors. Hinduism at its highest has, however, looked upon theism as only a half way house. The highest passages in the Upanishads,

which are the authoritative sources of Hinduism, go beyond theism. At the same time theism was never absent from the minds of even the greatest of our Upanishadic Rishis. For Yajnavalkya, in whom we have the highest pinnacle of Hindu religious thought, cries in one place like a Hebrew prophet: "Verily, at the command of the Imperishable, O Gargi, the sun and the moon stand apart. Verily, at the command of the imperishable, O Gargi, the heaven and the earth stand apart . . . . . Verily, O Gargi, if one offers oblations, performs sacrifices and undergoes austerities for thousands of years in this world, but does not know the Imperishable, one finds that perishable are all those acts."

But he concludes this very passage by saying: "Verily, O Gargi, this Imperishable is the unseen seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the unknown Knower. There is no other seer but this, no other Hearer but this, no other thinker

but this, and no other Knower but this. Across this Imperishable, O Gargi, is space woven and interwoven.' The founder of the Ramakrishna Movement, illiterate as he was, knew this distinction between Theism and Absolutism much more thoroughly than any scholar, and expressed it in his own inimitable way by saying that he regarded the former as the staircase and the latter as the terrace, and that he himself rested sometimes on the staircase and sometimes on the terrace. Accordingly, the Swamis of this movement are neither exclusively theists nor exclusively absolutists. They are Hindus recognising the validity of both types of experience. Another pitfall which lies in the path of a subject nation is the desire to nationalise its religion. A national religion is really a contradiction in terms. Every religion worth the name should be universal in character. Its rites and ceremonies and its forms of worship may be determined by time and place. But its doctrines and interpretations of life should have a universal appeal. Religions that are brought into existence for the purpose of promoting national solidarity or racial unity have in them the seeds of decay. They may appear as vigorous growths for a time. But they can never strike root. Success is fatal to them. They can thrive only on failure. It is a mistake to suppose that Hinduism in its best days was only a national religion like Judaism. The Rishis of the Upanishadic age had no national consciousness. Their minds were not caught up in any national apocalypse like that of Jesus Christ. It was a universal religion that they founded.

To them other nations were not like the dogs at the table. At the same time they recognised human limitations and prescribed graded forms of discipline that lead one from communalism to universalism. In this respect Sri Ramakrishna's own life is a perfect example of religious progress. For he began his life like every orthodox Brahman with a strict observance of caste rules in the matter of food, choosing to cook his own food rather than eat the *prasadam* given in the temple, but he ended it like a teacher of universal religion by making his disciples cosmopolitan and permitting them to receive food from all irrespective of caste or creed. I may sound a note of warning here to the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order. They are quite right in making Vedanta or mystical Hinduism a universal religion and preaching it in other lands. But in the homeland they should scrupulously preserve its Hindu shell and maintain the national character of its form. Their zeal for a universal religion should not result in a bloodless cosmopolitanism. We cannot afford to make Sri Ramakrishna go the way of Buddha.

A third pitfall in the way of the religion of a subject nation is mere stagnation. This is the worst of the dangers. Paying intellectual tribute to the political masters as well as trying to make political capital out of religious beliefs shows at least some signs of life. But to refuse to move and always to look backward and to perpetuate and worship forms from which all life has departed is to court death itself. And yet that was the position of three-fourths of our people in the latter part of the last century.

Between the theists and the nationalists, each class kicking in its own way to ward off death, there lay a huge mass of stagnant orthodoxy scarcely showing any signs of life. The Ramakrishna Movement transcends all these groups by the dynamic character of its religion as well as its comprehensive and universal character. In short, it may be looked upon as a modern edition of the Gita.

But the Ramakrishna Movement is not only faithful to the entire orbit of the Hinduism of the age of the Upanishads, but also thoroughly in accord with the tendencies of the religious movements of the present time all the world over. It is a well-known fact that within the last twenty or twenty-five years in Europe and America there has been a great revival of interest in the literature of mysticism. Students of religion have come to see that behind all religions there is a common mystic way with its well-marked stages of purification, illumination and union. They have come to realise that all the great mystics of the world, no matter to what religion they belonged, trod the same path, passed through the same stages and reached the same goal. As a result of this renaissance of mystic literature there is now everywhere a greater emphasis on experimental religion than on institutional religion. The Ramakrishna Movement is quite in accord with this tendency; for the founder himself was a great mystic, who had a first hand knowledge of religious experience.

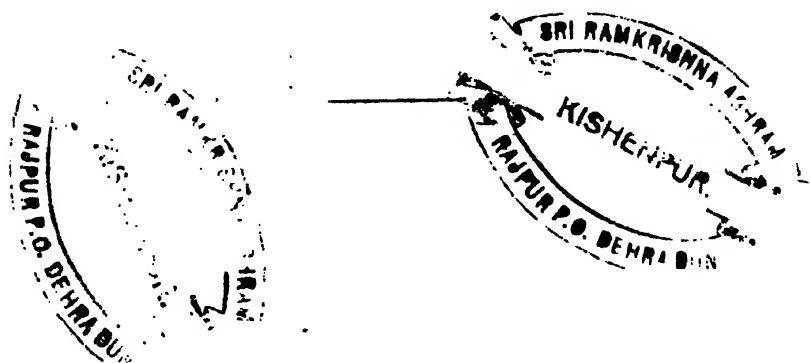
Another result of this renewed interest in mystic literature is, of course, religious toleration. Religious

toleration is no longer a matter of political policy, but, what it has always been in India, a matter of faith and conviction. Even Christian missionaries are now coming to see that the great religions of the world are not enemies, but allies engaged in a common cause. The real enemy, which all of them have to face, is atheism or scepticism or materialism. It is well known that in the matter of religious toleration the Ramakrishna Movement easily takes the first place. For the founder was not only a Hindu with whom religious toleration was an axiom but a mystic who demonstrated in his own life the truth of other religions than his own. He practised the Christian and Mohammadan *Sadhana*s as well as the Hindu Yoga, and realised for himself the identity of the goal of all the three.

And, lastly, the common tendency of all religious revivals of the present day is a quickened sensibility to social injustice along with an enthusiasm for social service. The individual good and the social good are the two wings of religion. That religion is the best which maintains a perfect balance between them. Speaking generally, we may say that in the contemplative East there has been a greater emphasis on the individual good than on the social good, whereas in the practical West there has been a greater emphasis on the social good than on the individual good. And everywhere religion becomes a byword for iniquity when it allies itself with power, privilege and wealth. Russia has become avowedly godless, for the people now believe that religion has been an insidious ally of monstrous social injustice.

Well, it must be frankly confessed that Hinduism has latterly been very weak on the side of social service. We have now in our midst innumerable institutions run by Christian missionaries. We have educational institutions of various kinds, we have hospitals, leper asylums, tuberculosis institutes, etc., etc.,—all manned with enthusiastic workers who have come from distant countries to labour amidst an alien population whose language, religion, customs and habits are so entirely different from their own. All honour to them—and shame to us ! But it is a matter for some consolation that the Ramakrishna Movement is everywhere trying its best to remove this blot on modern Hinduism. Its *Maths* are not only centres of religious teaching, but also of social service. Its Swamis are doing creditable work during famines, floods and earthquakes ; and in normal times they are running educational institutions and free dispensaries. They are unable to do more because their resources in men and money are limited in comparison with what the Christian missionaries have at their disposal. Here is a great duty that the Hindu

society has to discharge. The best way of raising a memorial to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa during this centenary year is to strengthen the Ramakrishna Movement by opening *Maths* in places where there are none and making them effective nuclei for religious teaching and social service by means of liberal donations and steady subscriptions. And the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order have also a duty to discharge. They should see that their *Maths* are not merely centres of social service coupled with a vague kind of universal religion, but places where religious contemplation, Yogic Sadhana and sound Sanskrit scholarship are given the first place and social service, the second place. From this point of view I am glad to say that the recent publications of the Order—Swami Madhavananda's translation of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with Sankara's famous commentary and Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada's Karika and Swami Viresvarananda's edition of the Brahma Sutras—are very reassuring.



## SIVA IN MADURA TEMPLE

*By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.*

*(Continued from last issue)*

[The various strands of spiritual, mythological and artistic ideals that have supplied the most magnificent background of our temple architecture are a source of perennial delight. With the eye of a reverent critic Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History in Madura College, gives in the following article a delineation of the various Saiva images in the temple of Madura which attracts innumerable pilgrims throughout the year by the impelling power of its spiritual inspiration and sculptural perfection. His brief account of the historic and mythic environments of these living monuments of the past cannot fail to kindle interest in the heart of all who could appreciate their immense value.]

**A**MONG the Samhara Moortis carved in this temple, at once the most realistic and terrible is the image of Gajasuramoorti, seen in one of the pillars in the Kambattadi Mantap. Siva is here seen killing an elephant and dancing with its skin as a Prabhamandala. This Moorti is more beautiful than similar Moortis represented in other temples. Again we do not find here the figures of Devi and Skanda usually associated with Gajasuramoorti. At the foot of Siva we see the head of the elephant monster. At the top we see the tail of the elephant and on either side the legs are most graphically chiselled. A very large number of nicely worked out ornaments are seen on the image of Siva. Siva has eight hands. In the three right hands are seen the trident, the kettle drum and the noose. Two of the three left hands hold the shield and the skull, while the third left hand is held in Vismaya pose. One cannot but be struck by the solemnity of the face. Several are the versions about the reason for Siva killing this giant. No doubt all versions agree in the fact that Siva killed an elephant and made use of its skin as a garment. The Kurma Purana while describing the Linga in

Benares observes that Siva came out suddenly from this Linga to kill an Asura who had assumed the shape of an elephant to kill all the Brahmins who were sitting round the Linga absorbed in meditation. A village in the Tanjore district, called Valuvur, is associated in the Tamil country with this destructive act of Siva, and this is perhaps the only place which has a beautiful metal image of Gajaharamoorti.

Kalahara Moorti is another type of Samharamoorti. Here we see Siva killing Yama, god of death, who came to take away the life of Markandeya, a staunch devotee of Siva. Rishi Mrikandu, it is said, was long without a son. He prayed to God for a long time. In answer to his prayers Siva appeared and asked him whether he would have many useless sons or one remarkably intelligent son who would live for only sixteen years. Mrikandu chose the latter and so very soon his wife bore him a son who was named Markandeya. No doubt as indicated by the Lord, Markandeya exhibited rare talents. But his parents were becoming more and more anxious as years advanced. The boy who got scent of this impending disaster to the family began

to offer worship to Siva and thus became a great devotee of Siva. The God of Death appeared exactly on the due date to take away Markandeya, little realising that Markandeya was now under the protection of Siva. We see in this sculpture Markandeya hugging as it were the Siva Linga. The God of Death is under the left foot of Siva who is seen dancing on the back of his body. The pointed left toe of Siva is seen piercing through the neck of Kala (Yama) while the right leg is on his hip. The twist that has been given to the body of Yama has only to be seen to be admired. It is at once natural and wonderful. The shield is still held by Yama in one hand and in the other we are able to see clearly the rope binding Markandeya. We see the God of Death look up to God Siva for his grace. The entire sculpture is very neatly executed and the sculptor has enabled us to see the anatomical details of the human body perfectly. Among the Samhara Moortis in the South Indian temples, this seems to be a type by itself.

Tripurantaka Moorti is another important aspect of Siva. We see this sculpture both in the Pudumantapam and Kambattadi Mantap. The one in the Kambattadi is far superior and better polished and carved. Here we see Siva just about to start on a military expedition in his delicately decorated chariot drawn by four horses. The right leg of Siva is kept a little in front and the left slightly bent to indicate motion. Siva is seen almost standing on his toes. The right hand is held in the Simhakarna pose and is holding the bow string in which the arrow is set. The chariot itself is being driven by Brahma whose figure

is seen just above the horses. Just opposite to this pillar we have the carved figures of the three Asuras against whom Siva was proceeding. The calm in the placid face of the figure of Siva in this terrible encounter with evil forces personified in the form of the demon crushed under his foot is a telling suggestion of the mighty glory of the Lord to whom no achievement is so great as to cause the slightest ruffle perceptible in his countenance.

The three Asuras represented in the pillar just opposite were the sons of one Tarakasura. After performing severe penance these three Asuras obtained from Brahma the boons by which each one got a castle of his liking—one was of gold and was located in heaven; another of silver located in the air and the third was of iron and located in the earth. These three castles were to become one after one thousand years and could be destroyed only by a single arrow. The atrocities committed by the Asuras were intolerable to the gods and goddesses; they therefore resorted to Brahma for advice. He suggested that they could go to Mahadeva who alone wielded such a wonderful weapon. When they approached, God Siva yielded to their prayer and started on his adventure. In their gratitude the gods served Mahadeva in several capacities. Vishnu became his arrow, Agni its barb and Yama its feather. Mahadeva made the Vedas his bow and Savitri his bow-string. Brahma became his charioteer. This is the composition which we see executed in this pillar. Though Siva is out on an expedition, his facial expression is remarkably serene. It is telling sug-

gestion of the mighty glory of the Lord to whom no adventure is too great to cause the slightest ruffle in the mind. The nails and the veins are most realistically indicated. The chariot itself by its superb decorations well deserves its worthy occupant.

Under Samhara Moortis must be mentioned the figure of Siva as Vira Bhadra located just to the east of the Kambattadi Mantap. The figure itself exceeds the size of an ordinary man and is one of the most superb in this temple. The proportions of the limbs cannot escape the notice of any. This form was assumed by Siva, as already pointed out, to destroy the Yajna of Daksha. In this sculpture we see Veerabhadra with ten arms ; three out of the five right hands carry the arrow, the axe, and the sword ; of the remaining two hands, one holds a long sword which is thrust into the neck of Daksha and the other pulls out an arrow from the quiver. The left hands keep in them the bow, the *musala* and the rope. In the matted locks we see flames on either side. Veerabhadra is seen standing on the prostrate body of Daksha Prajapati. The way in which the sculptor has indicated the thrusting of the sword through the neck of Daksha is particularly noteworthy.

We may now pass on to consider the various Santamoortis of Siva. Among these the figure that has received the maximum appreciation is that of Kalyana Sundara Moorti. This is also the most popular, as the marriage is the central theme of many a local legend. Here the sculptor has given a realistic description of Sundareswara's marriage with God-

dess Meenakshi. We see Mahavishnu pouring the sacred water on the joined hands of Sundareswara and his consort. Below are seen Brahma tending the sacred Agni and numerous other figures exhibiting a rare sense of joy. This figure is carved in many places in and around Madura. The two outstanding among these are the one found in Kambattadi Mantap and the other in Pudu Mantap. The uniformity maintained on the depiction of these figures shows that the Indian artists were experts in the art of imitation too. "When these artists were able to carve one image exactly like another, will it be impossible for them to carve an image exactly like a human being if ever they cared to do so?" The figure found in Pudu Mantapam belongs to the time of Tirumala Nayaka while the other found in Kambattadi Mantap is a recent carving. The figure of Kalyana Sundara Moorti is artistically perfect. The admirable modesty expressed in the slightly bent face of Parvati cannot escape the notice of any pilgrim. In the words of Mr. T. A. Gopinatha Rao, "In these the principal figures are Parvati, who is being given to Siva in marriage by Vishnu pouring water in the hands of Siva ; and Siva standing on the left with his right hand stretched out to receive the gift ; in front of and between him Vishnu is seen, with the head bent down in shyness, Parvati keeping her right hand lifted up so as to be taken hold of by Siva ; and on the left is Vishnu pouring water from a vessel on the hand of Siva. Below and in a countersunk panel is seen Brahma making fire-offering. The whole subject is treated with great cleverness and the effect is very

striking. There is not the elaborateness which one meets with in the cave temples of Northern and Western India, but the very simplicity of the sculpture carries a great charm with it. The shyness depicted on the countenance of the bride is very noteworthy."

*(To be continued)*

Vrishabaruda Moorti or Siva on his bull is another very interesting representation of Siva seen in this temple. There are two pillars in the Kambatadi Mantapam having Siva in this form. This form of Siva is held in high veneration, because it is on this form that Siva appeared to his devotees.

## THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

*By P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.*

[Mr. Nagaraja Rao gives the various reasons that justify the belief in the transmigration of souls.]

**T**HE one great and fundamental tenet of most schools of Indian Philosophy (with the exception of the Carvaka, i.e., the Materialist) is the belief in the immortality of the soul. The soul passes through a number of lives, and this is technically called in philosophic parlance "transmigration of souls." The plurality of lives through which the soul has to pass through is a dire necessity "in the art of soul making." Certain critics of Indian philosophy have suggested that the Hindu mind has never questioned the doctrine of transmigration of souls and has merely taken it as granted. The great professor Max Muller writes "that to a Hindu the idea that souls of men migrate after death into new bodies of living beings seems so self-evident that he does not trouble to assign any reason in support of it."

Further the doctrine of transmigration of souls is being objected to on the following two grounds: (1) that most of us do not recollect anything about our previous lives is enough evidence for the non-existence of any prior life. The rationalist cries out

"that God is a force, that the soul is a gas and that the next world is the coffin." The belief in the immortality of the soul, according to the psycho-analysis of the modern day, is a case of the sublimation of the fear complex of the self when it faces death. Secondly we do not find the presence of the soul anywhere without the body. The body and the soul are reciprocally dependent and inseparable. The body is essential to the soul's moral or mental life. At death we perceive the destruction of the body, and with it the soul also perishes. Hence the impossibility of the transmigration of the souls.

Our failure to remember the past is no argument for its non-existence. We should not confound the existence of a thing with its consciousness. As the experiences of our boyhood influence our adult life though we do not remember them, so also our past lives' influence our present in spite of our not remembering it. The doctrine that we are not the playthings of any capricious fate dispensing justice like a despot, and that we are what we are as a result of



our past is asserted by the grand moral law of Karma. The fact that individuals are themselves responsible for their well-being or otherwise is, no doubt, not the final explanation but still the only explanation the Hindu mind could offer for the existing diversity in individual characters. It is the law of Karma that makes Stoics of us in the presence of "this incomprehensible world full of the savage and the stupid and the suffering with monstrous contrast and queer happenings". Whatever the defects of this doctrine might be, it makes us bear patiently the never-ending trouble to which "flesh is heir unto".

All the schools of Indian philosophy postulate a "sukshma sarira" i.e., (a psychical vesture for the self subtler than the visible body). This body is destroyed only when the soul attains release. So there is no question of fear of the soul perishing with the body when it becomes defunct. The impressions, i.e., Vasanas are carried in the "sukshma sarira."

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is an integral part of the moral machinery of the cosmos, i.e.,

the law of Karma. The very fact of the different predilections of the different children at their births, and inequalities of human lives cannot be better accounted for than by the assumption of the law of Karma. The law of Karma affords liberty and gives freedom to individuals to grow to his full stature.

The Hindu doctrine of the transmigration of souls is essentially different in its outlook from that of others. The purpose of the cycle of life for the souls is not merely to suffer pain for past sins or to enjoy the fruits of a past goodness but to prepare themselves for the ultimate realisation wherein the cycle of births cease. There is no return from there. The concept of Moksha in most of the systems of Indian philosophy is the realisation of the true nature of the self, i.e., Eternal Freedom. It is not possible to achieve this Eternal Freedom without a plurality of lives. In the words of the learned Professor Hirianna "it is the poverty of man's present spiritual equipment taken along with the greatness of his final destiny that explains the belief in the plurality of lives."

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission for 1936

Swami Virajananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has issued the following Report on the working of the Ramakrishna Mission for 1936 :—

*Progress of Work for 1936* : The 28th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held on Good Friday evening at the premises of the Headquarters of the Mission with Srmat Swami Vignananandaji, the President of the Mission, in the chair. A large number of monastic and lay members were present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. The report for 1936 was then presented by Srmat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of work in 1936.

*Centres* : The total number of centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements including the centres in N. and S. America, England and Europe, was 93 at the end of the year under review. The

number of centres in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements exclusive of the Ramakrishna Math and its branches, was 47.

*Temporary Relief Work :* Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by floods, famine, cyclone or epidemics in Bankura, Hooghly, Burdwan, Khulna, Maldah, Birbhum, Cuntur, Cawnpore, and Midnapore districts, as well as in Burma.

*Medical and General Service :* In the 7 Indoor Hospitals of the Mission including the Maternity Hospital at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, more than 7,700 cases were treated in 1936 as against 6,839 in 1935. In the 31 Outdoor Dispensaries including the Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi were treated 10,29,349 cases in the year as against nearly 9,00,000 in 1935. The proportion of the new and repeated cases was 3:5.

The Sevashrama at Benares continues to be the largest philanthropic institution of the Mission. The Hospital at Rangoon holds the highest record for both indoor and outdoor service. It treated more than 2,27,000 cases during the year under review.

Philanthropic work is also done by such rural centres as Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Sargachhi in Murshidabad and Jayarambati in Bankura.

There are large Hospitals and Dispensaries also at Hardwar, Brindaban and Allahabad, as well as Bombay, Madras, Lucknow, Cawnpore and other cities and towns.

*Educational :* The Educational institutions of the Mission fall mainly into two divisions, viz., (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, and (2) Students' Homes and Orphanages.

Mass education through day and night schools was continued as usual for the benefit of juveniles and adults.

In India there were 15 Students' Homes, 3 Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools and 4 High Schools, 2 M. E. Schools, 35 Primary Schools a Sanskrit *tal*, 10 Night Schools and 3 Industrial Schools, and in Ceylon and Strait Settlements 14 High schools and Vernacular Schools.

Some of the schools and students' homes are situated in or around the University centres of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, as well as in Cawnpore, Coimbatore, Jamshedpore, Deoghar and Barisal. Physical, cultural, moral and religious training were imparted to the students.

Rural education work was done by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore and Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha had nearly 500 boys and girls at its schools and spent over Rs. 12,000 during the year as in the previous years. The Sister Nivedita (High) School for girls had 490 students and is the largest High School for girls in the Mission. The Vidyapith at Deoghar and the Students' Home at Dum Dum are also important institutions. The centre at Madras had the highest number of pupils, the total strength in the Students' Home at Mylapore and the Mambalam Branch School at Mambalam, Madras being 1317 in 1936, and the total annual expenditure being over Rs. 50,000.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the crafts, arts and industries which may be grouped as follows : (1) mechanical and auto-mobile engineering, (2) spinning, weaving, dyeing, calico-printing and tailoring, (3) cane work and (4) shoe making. In the Industrial School at Madras the mechanical and auto-mobile engineering course covers a period of five years, and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe factories to provide better training ground for the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

In all there were 7,390 students in all the centres in 1936 as against 6,034 in 1935, and of these more than 1,600 were girls.

*Expenditure :* The total expenditure of the Mission for permanent educational and philanthropic work in India, Burma, Ceylon and Strait Settlements may be roughly computed to be over 6½ lakhs of rupees.

*Libraries and Reading Rooms :* There were 60 Libraries and Reading Rooms in all the centres together. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent work and had a daily average attendance of nearly 100 in its reading rooms. The Students'

Home at Madras had more than 19,000 volumes in its libraries.

**Missionary:** The monastic members of the Mission went on propaganda tours in India and abroad. The universal teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated chiefly through the publications of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in English and some principal Indian and European languages; through the periodicals named the *Prabuddha Bharata*, the *Vedanta Kesari* and the *Message of the East*—all in English—and the *Udbodhan* in Bengali and *Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, and similar other works. Classes were held and lectures and often radio talks given at or near the various centres, Universities and other associations.

There are colonies for Harijans and other backward classes in some centres, those at Trichur in Cochin State and Shella in Khasia Hills being two important ones. At these colonies the monks of the Mission have been conducting for over a dozen years past educational and other work for the uplift of the neglected communities.

**The ideal of service:** Swami Vivekananda who founded the Mission in 1897 sounded the clarion call of *tyaga* and *seva* (self-dedication and service) and it is to be hoped that the youth of the country will respond to it in ever increasing measure.

#### **Swami Avinashananda's Cultural Mission in Fiji**

In response to a long-standing and pressing invitation from the South Indian Association of Fiji to send a Swami of the Ramakrishna Order to Fiji, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Math have now selected and deputed Swami Avinashananda for the purpose. It was not an easy matter to select a proper person as the conditions demanded by the Association were that the Swami who went should be able to speak Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English. Swami Avinashananda can speak well Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam as well as Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati, besides English.

The Swami had much experience in the field of education and journalism before he joined the Ramakrishna Order in 1922,

and since then he has been filling many responsible positions in the different centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In the beginning of 1923 he went to Bombay and did some spade work for the starting of an Ashrama in the city. In 1924 he went to Mayavati and was connected with the Editorial work of the *Prabuddha Bharata* for nearly two years. In 1926 he was sent to Ceylon to assist Swami Vipulananda who had started many educational centres there. While in Ceylon he was for some years the General Manager of the Schools of the Mission, and was also responsible for preparing and piloting through the Ceylon Legislative Council an Ordinance incorporating the branch of the Mission in the Island. From Ceylon he returned about the end of the year 1930, and in 1931 made an extensive propaganda tour in South Canara, Malabar and Andhradesa. From 1932 he was solely engaged in the work connected with Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration and had been responsible for collection, collaboration and preparation of the manuscripts for the Cultural Heritage of India, which has been published just now in three volumes. These volumes form one of the most remarkable books published in India, both from the point of view of scholarship and artistic value.

In the year 1916, when Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the first President of the Math and Mission, came to Madras, Swami Avinashananda had the good fortune to come in contact with him and receive his grace and blessings. He was also privileged to meet and receive the blessings of the Holy Mother, Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, Swami Turiyanandaji, Swami Saradanandaji and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Deva.

The South Indian Association of Fiji will have the good fortune to have the Swami in their midst, and we hope that by the grace of God he will be able to do great service to the people of Fiji, especially to the children of India who are living far away from their motherland in a country where they have little opportunity to draw inspiration from the cultural and religious tradition of India.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

भेषज्यमेतद् दुःखस्य यदेतन्नानुचिन्तयेत् । चिन्त्यमानं हि चाभ्येति भृशश्चापि प्रवर्तते ।  
प्रज्ञया मानसं दुःखं हन्यान्धाररिमौषधैः । एतद् विज्ञानं सामर्थ्यं न बालैः समतामियात् ॥  
अनित्यं यौवनं रूपं जीवितं द्रव्यसञ्चयः । आरोग्यं प्रियसंवासो गृध्येतत्र न पण्डितः ।  
न जानपदिकं दुःखमेकः शोचिमुमहंति । अशोचन् प्रतिकुर्वीत यदि पश्येदुपक्रमम् ॥  
सुखाद् बहुतरं दुःखं जीविने नास्ति संशयः । स्निग्धस्यचेन्द्रियायेषु मोहान्मरणमप्रियम् ।  
परित्यजति यो दुःखं सुखं वाप्युभयं नरः । अभ्येति ब्रह्म सोऽत्यन्तं न ते शोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

The remedy for sorrow is to stop brooding over it. If the mind dwells on sorrow it freshens and multiplies. One should eradicate mental suffering by wisdom, and physical ailments with medicines. That is the power of intelligence, and no intelligent man should behave in a childish way. No one gifted with knowledge and understanding should ever show any inordinate desire for youth or physical charm or accumulated possessions or unbroken company of friends or even health and life; for they are by their very nature impermanent. It does not befit one to sorrow long and loud for a national misfortune. With an undepressed mind one should actively remedy it if one could find a way to it. There is no doubt that sufferings outweigh the pleasures of life. Death is unpleasant because it cuts short the sense enjoyments which the deluded man fondly longs for. The courageous one gives up either grief or pleasure, or both, and takes his stand absolutely on the Supreme. Such a wise one has no room for sadness.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva. Ch. 203.

## THE CASE FOR RELIGION

[In the following paragraphs some of the important arguments generally urged against religion are considered, and suggestions are made as to what can form the basis of a true philosophy of religion.]

### I

**I**T will hardly be disputed by any one that in these days the influence of religion on the lives of individuals and societies has considerably diminished in comparison with its position in this respect during the past. The growth of individualism, the increasing absorption of men in political and economic struggle, the belief in establishing a paradise on earth through the application of science—these are some of the important circumstances that have diverted the attention of men from religion to other pre-occupations of life. But the effects of modern critical study of religion in bringing about this result is also not to be underestimated. It is not that atheistic and anti-religious thought is a special feature of our age. Able thinkers of this persuasion have existed in the past and have in a large measure anticipated the ideas of our modern prophets of ungodliness. But the latter have got advantages which the former did not possess, and this accounts for the difference in the extent of their influence on the mind of common men. In the past educational institutions and whatever methods of publicity that might have existed were all under the control of religious leaders. But to-day due to the secularisation of education, the transfer of the custody of learning from the priests of religion to the priests of science and the tremendous educative influence exerted by cheap literature on the popular mind, have

all reversed the situation completely, and the swing of the pendulum of mass thought has definitely turned in favour of anti-religious forces.

It would be interesting to recount here some of those convenient slogans into which anti-religious thought has crystallised itself and which are administered commonly as universal cures for the cultural and mental maladjustments of human societies just like their physical counter-parts, the popular pills and potions advertised widely as the common remedy against all the diseases that flesh is heir to. Religion is decried by Marxists as the opiate of the people, because it is supposed to dull their sense of the hard realities of this world with the narcotic of otherworldliness. Freudians fling against it a formidable pile of epithets—a universal neurosis, a wish fulfilment, a child-fixation, an illusion and what not. To minds steeped in psycho-analytic lore, these words are supposed to shed a flood of light on the origin and nature of religion, but laymen had better be wary of this jargon although it has by now gained the dignity of scientific technicality. There is again the clique of anthropologists and psychologists, which propagates the theory that religion has no foundation in objective reality nor any natural basis in human nature, either in its individual or collective aspect. They attribute its origin and growth entirely to priestcraft that worked on the imaginative fears of men and opine that even if it

had done some good in the past, it is suited only to the pre-scientific age and is therefore bound to pass away with the growth of scientific thinking among the masses. There are still others who agree completely with these scientific thinkers in denying any objective validity to the religious idea, but yet believe that the world may never outgrow the need for it as the inner experiences it gives have a toning effect on the psychic life of man.

It is not possible here to consider the answer of the religious mind to all these challenges coming from different quarters. People pre-occupied with this or that aspect of life—say, with economic and political struggle as in the case of Marxists, or the treatment of mental diseases as in that of Psychoanalysis — may criticise the religious world-view from their own points of view, but the religious mind is only concerned with the question whether religion is only a concoction of clever men, and whether the religious object is merely an illusory idea. Our concern here is only with these aspects of the question.

Before we proceed with this enquiry we must state in brief what we mean by religion, although a clear definition of the term is very difficult and has defied the attempts of even the best thinkers of the world. For our purpose here, we may take it to mean man's attempt to find an ultimate meaning for the universe, and for his own existence in it, through the conception of a Supreme Intelligence who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe, and the ultimate determiner of the individual's destiny—a being in whom are conserved all that we consider to be the

highest values in life. Religion stands or falls with the truth or otherwise of this idea of the Deity. To call Him an illusion and yet plead for the service of religion in the psychical life of man may appear quite a natural and sound procedure to some thinkers, but to a religious man such a theory appears to be mere opportunism in thought and as unsubstantial as a sky-scraper without a foundation. The case for religion therefore rests entirely on how far we are able to justify the idea of God as true, and it shall be our attempt here to consider this question.

## II

In doing so it is first of all necessary to see why scientific thought is so hostile to the idea of God. This prejudice of many a modern thinker against the idea of God is due to the evolutionary interpretation of it. The doctrine of evolution, originally propounded in the field of biology as an explanation of the origin of species, has been extended to every branch of thought, and as a consequence the exacting traditions of modern scholarship require every cultural conception to be traced to its supposed origins until it is dissipated in the nebulous clouds of primitive barbarism. The idea of God also must be treated in the same way and traced to some primitive superstitions; for the doctrine of evolution, the infallible dictum of the scientist's scripture, declares that it cannot but be so. So the scientific thinker must cook up evidence in favour of an age when there was no notion of God, and of the gradual growth and clarification of that notion from a mass of primitive superstitions; otherwise the doctrine of evolution may not be proved to

be of universal application. Modern scholars, who are ever loud in their professions of dispassionateness and disinterestedness in everything save truth, have therefore been busy sifting the facts provided by travellers and explorers about primitive societies with a view to find a superstitious and ridiculously absurd origin for the idea of God. According to these thinkers the most primitive societies known to man have no religion or religious sense. Religion is a later growth in cultural evolution and has its origin in primitive animism. Animism consists of belief in spirits or souls residing in bodies. The savages derived such a notion from the experience of dreams in which they felt their selves or doubles going out of their bodies even to distant places on errands familiar to them in waking life. "How absurd is the theory of the soul resting on such flimsy foundations!" say the modern thinkers.

The absurdity however does not end with this. These doubles were supposed to survive physical death, and the doubles, especially of chiefs and powerful men, were conceived as retaining their might and influence over the lives and welfare of their fellow-beings. From this belief grew the cult of ghost worship and propitiation, both for warding off the wrath of these powerful tribal ancestors as well as to secure their good offices in every-day life. In course of time some of the more powerful and famous among the ghosts alone survived. Their ghostly character was gradually forgotten and they were elevated into tribal gods of which one came to be regarded as supreme by a tribe. As the tribes amalgamated into nations, the gods of the dominant tribe were raised

into national gods, and some of these nations among whom thinkers and prophet-poets arose, the national god was transformed by them into the God of the universe. Thus, say the non-religious thinkers, anthropology demonstrates conclusively that God, the fundamental postulate of religion, is the product of puerile superstition, venerated later on with poetic fancies; when men come to realise this fact that the study of social evolution reveals, they will refuse to put faith any longer in the pretentious claims of religion.

Before we proceed further, the case for religion in regard to this point has to be considered. If there are many scholars—Spencer, Tylor, Durkheim, etc., are some among them—who find the verdict of anthropology as favouring a superstitious origin for religion, there is at least one scholar, namely, Andrew Lang who extracts quite a different moral from anthropology regarding the origin of religion. He points out that the other group of thinkers have sedulously suppressed facts that go against their pre-conceived notion regarding the applicability of the doctrine of evolution to everything in this world. With a wealth of examples from the writings of travellers and explorers he shows conclusively that prior to the origin of ghost cult, primitive people had belief in a Supreme Creator God, who was ethical in character and whose worship consisted not in propitiation but in prayer and moral observances. Darumulun of the Australians, Cagan of the Bushmen, Puluga of the Andamanese, Vin of the Black Islanders, Ndengi of the Fijians, Unkulenkulu of the Zulus, and Okcus, Ti-ra-wa and Na-pi of American tribes are examples of such creator

Gods who, in the words of Lang, soften the heart, who know the heart's secrets, who inculcate chastity, respect of age, unselfishness, etc., and who receive no blood of slaughtered man or beast. According to his theory, which has got the support of innumerable facts from primitive life, the ghost gods arose in a more advanced stage of material culture when men began to feel the need of more useful and easily bribable supernatural agencies for the satisfaction of their material needs. In most societies the tradition of the creator God, however, survived, although He was relegated to the back-ground by the jostling crowd of venal, blood-thirsty spirits and rapacious gods. The God of higher religion, according to Lang, is traceable not to these spirits and godlings as other thinkers would hold, but to the original tradition of creator God which came to be revived and re-charged with meaning by later generations of prophets and inspired men.

### ·III

The layman may be a little puzzled as to which of these conflicting theories about the origin of religion he is to adopt. He need, however, accept neither, but only understand that the so-called non-religious thinkers are not so dispassionate and disinterested as they claim, and that anthropology is like a double-edged sword which may be used with fatal effect against the spiritual interpretation of religious origin or against the evolutionary interpretation of it, according to the predilection of the theorising scholar. Whatever his view on the question, the scholar must realise the serious consequences of releasing his dubious theories,

based on uncertain data, on the mind of the unsuspecting and credulous crowd of half-educated persons.

Besides this, both the religious man and the anthropologist have to bear in mind that by tracing the history of an idea to its supposed origin nothing is proved either for or against the truth of that idea. That astronomy had its origin in astrology, or chemistry in alchemy does not in any way show that these sciences are absurd. It is however curious that men have never raised such points as arguments against these sciences, but do not often feel the absurdity of doing so in the case of religion. In religion, more than in any other branch of human culture, the progressive refinement of thought and emotions would lead to higher and higher expressions of the religious truth. Each progressive step is not a negation of the cruder stage but a more accurate and more refined formulation of the truth. When Newton propounded his theories, what he did was not to negate the previous theories *in toto* but to give a more correct statement of the truth involved in them. So also higher development of religious concepts does not prove that religion is a wild-goose chase any more than it does with regard to physics, chemistry and other sciences.

Religion claims the allegiance of man on quite different grounds. It maintains that the life prescribed by it opens to man vistas of soul-stirring experiences that go to enrich the personality—experiences which he cannot gain by following the methods of the secular sciences and arts. According to the evaluation of the great men of religion, who are also among the greatest men of the world, religious experience gives one an assur-



ance of God which in point of convincingness is in no way inferior to the experience of the brute realities of the world. This experience of God is not, according to the authority of mystics and founders of religions, a mere momentary feeling, but a part and parcel of the experiencing consciousness throughout life ; and what is more its effect is manifested in every aspect of a person's life as strength of character, purity, fearlessness, love and other moral virtues in a degree unseen in the life of others. Religion, as the only branch of culture leading to this supreme experience of life, namely the verification of Divine existence, deserves the highest respect and attention of man. This has all along been the unanimous and unflinching claim put on behalf of religion by its great prophets and apostles.

#### IV

To an impartial mind this justification of religion, especially when viewed in relation to the great personalities who have advanced it, will appear sufficiently satisfying. But there have been hard-headed scientists who, while accepting the fact of religious experience, look upon its object, namely the Divine, as an unsubstantial illusion, because the object, being only a private experience, belongs to the category of mere feeling and therefore fails to fulfil the scientific test of being measureable by pointer-reading instruments. Thus God is not true inspite of religious experience, as He fails to make any impression on the scientists' scale and balances.

To this it may be replied that the scientists suffer from too crude a notion of reality. It is a dogma of

science, unacceptable to those who do not share its prejudices, that the accounts given by pointer-reading instruments alone constitute the test of valid facts. There are other spheres of reality which are inaccessible to mechanical contrivances but are none the less real for all that, as testified by universal experience. Colour and sound are, for example, unknown to any pointer-reading instrument of the scientist, but for this reason to deny their existence will be a hazardous step, as beyond our experience there is nothing to testify to the reality of even the pointer-readings of science. If the rich experience of colour, sound, touch, etc., through which alone we understand the world, and from which alone the world receives the significance we attach to it—if all that is to be brushed aside as illusory, why should we not put the experience derived from the pointer-readings of science also in the same category. At least the plain man cannot understand the scientist's logic in this respect.

Then again we must not forget that, even from the common sense point of view, we know of vistas of rich, life-giving experiences gained by contacts that cannot be called sensuous. For example, the great poet, painter or composer, starting it may be from suggestions thrown into him by stimuli coming from sensuous contacts, takes a flight into sublime heights on the wings of imagination, and there his personality, by contact with the ideal realm of Beauty, draws an inspiration which he expresses through words and colour. The hard-headed scientist may like to disregard all those experiences of higher value as mere fancies, but then it has to be explained how it is that

mere fancies can be so life-enhancing and permanent in their effect both on the experiencer and on those who share his experience through his creations? how these so-called fancies are open only to a few and that not the stray and sundry but the best of our species? and more than all, how in a world conceived merely as a play of mechanical forces, a cosmic environment devoid of the fact of beauty, such a faculty as aesthetic experience could ever have grown in the human being? The philosopher who denies an existence to the higher values will be faced with the same difficulty with regard to moral experience too. If we deny a moral element in the universe of which we are a part, how could man, a product of that universe, have felt the ethical sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, even at low levels of evolution? To reply that the sense is merely a product of social life is no explanation; for the question really is how society could at all have become so constituted as to engender and develop the moral sense in man. To deny entity to the aesthetic and moral ideals on the ground that we do not experience them with our senses is as idle as denying the existence of colour, sound, etc., because the pointer-readings of the scientists' instruments do not record them:

The application of this argument to the question of spiritual experience will be sufficiently obvious from what we have said before. Aesthetic and moral experiences are familiar facts, and from these familiar facts it may be easier to pass to the more unfamiliar but parallel case of spiritual experience. In this decade of the 20th century no sane man can possibly denounce experiences of the

latter class as mere myth, fable or concoction of interested parties. When the fact of such experience is admitted, to deny for it any reference in the universe which has facilitated its growth is as difficult to understand by common sense as the theory of moral and aesthetic experience being based upon illusion. The validity of this experience cannot also be questioned on the ground that it is a product of passions and prejudices; for, the men in whom it is found in a pre-eminent degree have always been persons of great moral integrity, purity of life, control of senses and passions, and equanimity and balance of mind. In fact except on a foundation of mental equilibrium and sublimation of animal passions, no spiritual edifice culminating in the pinnacle of realisation has ever been built.

## V

Spiritual experience, the basis of all genuine religion, derives support also when we consider the nature of the impulse leading to it. This impulse consists in yearning for God, and as we find it manifested in the best type of men, it is organic with their whole being, proceeding as it seems to do from every fibre of their mind and every cell of their body. In the case of every organic craving, we find a correspondence between the inner need and the environment. In other words, our organic cravings are fundamentally rooted in our cosmic environment and depend upon the very affinity of our being with that environment. Hence the craving of man for food, water, air, etc., is only indicative of the fact that our body is derived from these objects, and that for the satisfaction of these cravings there are corresponding objects in

nature, i.e., our physical environment. Thus from our common experience, therefore, we find that an organic craving is never based upon illusion; as the craving is real, so is its object too. Our contention therefore is this: if we recognise the demand for God as organic with the personality of man—and this is what we are inevitably led to when we study the life of the greatest men of the world, the sages, saints and incarnations—then it is but common sense to admit that the object of this craving, viz., God too is real. For the lives of saints not only reveal the organic nature of this craving but convinces us also of the possibility of its satisfaction by the realisation of God.

As a possible objection to this argument it may be said that most of us do not feel any such craving for God. Why should we then accept the organic nature of this craving simply because a few mad saints experience it. To this we reply that there are organic cravings in man which, unlike the demand for water, air, food, etc., manifest only at a certain stage of maturity, but yet have none the less to be called organic because of their deep-seated springs in our nature and their profound influence on the development of our personality. Sex is one such craving which comes into prominence only at the maturity of the organism. Craving for God is also similar, because it appears only in men who have attained a certain stage of mental maturity, and these are the saints and sages of the world. Other men may appear mature physically, but they are really babies, moustached though they be, as long as they are satisfied with the playthings of the world—wealth, power, pleasures, name, fame, etc. It is

when man reaches the true inner maturity that he cultivates comparative non-attachment for the things of the world and begins to experience a yearning for God rising from the roots of his personality, as if he is being starved of a substance which is the basic constituent of his being. These are the real adults—men in whom the latent powers of humanity have all come to their fullest development. To call these unique specimens of humanity as degenerates, as some ultra-modern thinkers are disposed to do, is only idle prattle that results either from the ignorance or prejudice of the critics. The spiritual experiences of these god-men charge their will and vivify their personality with such powers that the impression they leave on the world continues to mould the character of men even hundreds of years after they have passed away. Not only in point of power but in the sublimity of character, in selfless love, in purity of life and other qualities that vitalise and ennoble human personality, these men have set the standard for the world. If degeneration and floundering in illusory fancies can make men into gods, then blessed is that degeneration, and blessed too that illusion. To any impartial and unprejudiced student of their life and teachings, these men who occasionally illumine the dark ignorance and bestiality of our social life, would appear as veritable sign-posts of human destiny guiding us at the cross-roads of life to our true goal, and inspiring us with the assurance that the paths of life lead us not to an El Dorado but to a real, glorious and divine end.

To conclude, therefore, has religion got a case on its side? We may give an emphatic 'yes' in reply, as long

as we can show the case of a single true saint who exemplifies in himself this organic craving for God and its satisfaction in God-realisation.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**A**NOTHER day at Brindavan, in the garden of Kala Babu, she was immersed in Samadhi. Nothing could bring her down from that state of ecstasy. For a long time I whispered the sacred name of God into her ear, but that also did not produce any effect. At last, Swami Yogananda whispered some sacred words into her ear, and that brought her mind back somewhat to the consciousness of this world. She said, as Sri Ramakrishna would do on similar occasions, "I will eat something". Some sweets, water and betel leaf were put before her. She partook of a little of each as Sri Ramakrishna would do in the state of Samadhi. She even ate betel leaf just after the manner of the Master, throwing away its point. All her physical manifestations at that time, eating, talking, etc., were just like those of Sri Ramakrishna. We were totally amazed at it. After she came down to the physical plane of consciousness, she said to us that Sri Ramakrishna had entered into her consciousness at that time. Swami Yogananda put several questions to her during the time of her Samadhi, and received replies from her as if Sri Ramakrishna were answering

him. A few days after Sri Ramakrishna passed away, Ram Babu and a few other householder devotees settled the rent of the Cossipore garden house, where Sri Ramakrishna had passed the last days of his life. It was not their intention to rent a place after the Master's death for any of the young men who had renounced the world during the lifetime of the Master, to lead a life of intense spirituality. Therefore the Holy Mother removed to the house of Balaram Babu. After some time, she came to Benares on a pilgrimage with Swami Yogananda, Swami Abhedananda, Swami Adbhutananda, Lakshmi Didi and others. After staying in holy Benares for eight or ten days, they came to Brindaban and stayed for about a year in the garden house of Kala Babu. I had left for Brindaban about a fortnight before the passing away of the Master. No sooner did the Mother meet me at Brindaban than she cried out through an excess of grief, "Oh, Yogen dear!" and clutching me to her heart, began to weep like a helpless child. That was my first meeting with her after the Master's death. At Brindaban the Mother at first would weep much for

the Master. One day Sri Ramakrishna came to me in a vision and said, "Hallo! Why do you weep? Here I am. Where do you think I have gone? It is just like this: this room and the other room." One day while at Brindaban, we saw a dead body decorated with flowers, being carried to the cremation ground, to the accompaniment of devotional music. The Mother pointed it out to me and said, "Look there! How fortunate is the man to meet his holy end at this sacred Brindaban. I also came here expecting the last moment of my life, but how curious it is that I have not gotten so much as a little fever even. And I am no longer young. Look at my age! I have seen in my life such elderly people as my own father and husband's elder brother." I began to laugh and said, "What are you saying, Mother? You have seen your father? But tell me, who does not meet his father?" She was so childlike in her talk and behaviour. Though at first she was overwhelmed with grief for Sri Ramakrishna and cried for him excessively, in the end the Master filled her heart with ineffable joy. At that time she looked just like a small girl. Every day she would go round the temples and visit the images therein. One day she went to the temple of Radha and Krishna and saw that the wife of Navagopal\* was, as it were, fanning the gods on their throne. The Mother came back and said to me, "Yogen, Navagopal's wife is very pure. I saw her in that fashion in the temple."

At Brindaban, the Mother had a vision one day of Sri Ramakrishna, who said to her, "Please initiate Jogen (Swami Yogananda) with this

Mantram. ....". The first day Holy Mother took it to be a delusion of her mind. The vision appeared to her on the second day, with the same request, but she did not listen to it. The third day, when Sri Ramakrishna appeared to her in vision again, she said to the Master, "I never talk to Jogen. How can I initiate him?" The Master said, "You ask Jogen (the woman devotee and narrator of the story) and she will be there!"

The Mother asked Swami Yogananda through me whether he had received any Mantra from the Master during his lifetime. Swami Yogananda said, "No, Mother, he did not ask me to repeat any particular Mantra. I have selected a holy word myself and repeat it." Thereupon the Holy Mother gave him the sacred word as directed by the Master. It happened in this wise: one day the Mother was worshipping in her room; a picture of the Master and a small box containing his bones were before her. She sent for Swami Yogananda and asked him to sit near her. While performing the worship, she entered into Samadhi and in that state of ecstasy she initiated Swami Yogananda. She uttered the holy word so loudly that I could hear it from the next room.

From Brindaban we all accompanied the Mother to Hardwar. Swami Yogananda also was in our party. While travelling, Swami Yogananda was laid down in the railway train with a terrible attack of fever. I was feeding him with a pomegranate. The Mother saw this as if I were feeding Sri Ramakrishna himself. Swami Yogananda was unconscious due to the fever. He saw a horrible figure coming to him. That figure said, "I was about to snatch thee

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\*A lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

away, but what can I do? I must leave the place at once by the command of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I cannot stay here for a second. Then the figure pointed out a woman wearing a red-bordered cloth, and said, "Offer some sweets to this woman." To the amazement of all, after this vision the fever left him altogether. From Hardwar we all came to Jeypur. After visiting the celebrated temple of Govindaji, we were visiting other images, when Swami Yogananda saw a figure in a temple and cried out, "I was asked to give the offering of sweets to this image." We also discovered a store in front of the temple selling the particular kind of sweets which were to be offered before the image. We at once purchased some of these sweets and offered them as directed. On inquiry we came to know that it was the image of Mother Shitala\*.

Afterwards, the Mother returned to Calcutta and stayed at the house of Balaram Babu for a few days. Then she came back to Kamarpukur. After spending about a year there, she came to Belur, where the devotees rented a house for her belonging to Nilambar Babu. This happened in 1888. During the autumn season, the Mother left that rented house and again came to Calcutta to the house of Balaram Babu. Having spent a day or two there, she set out for Puri. She travelled from Calcutta to Chandvali in a big steamer, and from Chandvali to Cuttack in the canal boat, and lastly she took a bullock cart to Puri. Swami Saradananda, Swami Brahmananda and Swami Yogananda and others accompanied the Holy Mother to Puri. She spent about four months

\*A female deity associated by the Hindus with small-pox.

there. As Sri Ramakrishna did not visit the temple of Jagannath at Puri during his lifetime, the Mother carried a picture of him with her to the temple, and showed the image to the picture. After visiting the image of Jagannath, the Mother said, "I saw the Lord of the Universe as a lion among men, seated on a golden altar, and I was serving Him as His handmaiden." After returning from Puri, she spent about a month at the house of the master\* and then went to Antpur, the native place of Swami Premananda. Swami Premananda, Swami Vivekananda, M. and a few other devotees accompanied her. A week later, she went by bullock cart to Tarakeswar and thence to Kamarpukur. M. and others were in the party. She lived there for about a year and during the next spring returned to Calcutta.

At that time, the Holy Mother spent about a month in the house of M. Then she removed to the home of Balaram Babu, during the time of his fatal illness, and stayed there till his passing away. Subsequently she came to live at Belur, during the rainy season of 1890. As she suffered from an attack of blood dysentery there, the Mother was removed to the house rented of Sourindra Mohan Tagore, at Baranagar. After spending a few days there, she again came to Balaram Babu's house, and after the Durga Puja she returned to her native place, Jayrambati, by way of Kamarpukur.

In the rainy season of 1893, the Holy Mother again came to the rented house of Nilambar Babu, and during the next spring she spent a couple of months at Kailwar, in northern India. From there she went again to

\*The recorder of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, also known as 'M.'

Benares and Brindaban with her mother and brothers. After returning from northern India she spent about a month in Calcutta in the house of M., and then returned to her native village. When she returned again to Calcutta, she spent about five or six months at Baghbazar, in a rented house near the Ganges, where Nag Mahashaya, the famous householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, visited her. Again the Mother went back to her native place and stayed there for a year and a half. This time when the Holy Mother came to Calcutta, she took up her quarters at a house in front of Girish Babu's. There Sister Nivedita spent three weeks with the Mother. Again she removed to a house at 16 Bosepara Lane, where Sister Nivedita first started her girls' school. Thence she came to the house in Baghbazar Street, in front of Ramakrishna Lane. Swami Saradananda was there with her. Then the Mother went back to her native place, and returned to Calcutta on the occasion of the Durga Puja at Girish Babu's house. During the festival she lived with Balaram Babu's family. While staying at her

native village she suffered very much from malaria, and became emaciated because of it. Then she again returned to Jayrambati. By this time the new building of the Udbodhan Office was constructed, and as soon as she came back to Calcutta, she lived there. Next, the Holy Mother went on a pilgrimage to Madras, Bangalore and Rameswar. After spending some time in these places, she came back to the Udbodhan Office, and a few days later went to Jayrambati to attend the marriage ceremony of Radhu. After a year, she again returned to the Udbodhan Office. In the autumn of 1912, the Mother visited Benares, and after spending three months there, she came back to Calcutta.

During her childhood, the Holy Mother had to cook very often. She was substituted as cook in place of her own mother, when for some unavoidable reasons the latter could not attend to it. The Mother used to say, "I cooked and my father helped me to take down the big rice pot from the oven." During the latter part of her life, she spent most of her time in the service of her relatives and devotees.

## HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL ASPIRANTS

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'Universal Prayers' and 'The Divine Life,' is the representative of the Ramakrishna Order preaching the gospel of Vedanta in the continent of Europe. The Swami was formerly the Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras and the Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*. In this article the Swami gives many practical suggestions to spiritual aspirants.]

### CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

**W**ITHOUT previously having attained to a certain amount of sublimation and purification of our feelings and desires, concentra-

tion becomes very dangerous in the case of persons who have not prepared themselves properly for the higher life. It may lead to very bad effects. In a way, we all make the mind concentrated, but then we do not

know how to manipulate it. This concentrated mind will run after sensual enjoyments and all kinds of worldly distractions and objects with a greater intensity for having become concentrated. So, if we do not know how to handle it in the right way, it becomes a great danger. It is far better not to have concentration if one does not attain sublimation at the same time. Therefore the necessity of purity, of non-injury, truthfulness, continence etc., in thought, word and deed, has to be stressed very much. Without sublimation of all our desires and feelings we cannot progress in the spiritual path. It is after we have followed a strict code of ethics and morals that we should attempt concentration and meditation. The concentrated mind, if it is not purified, becomes a veritable demon and creates untold troubles for the spiritual aspirant.

The concentration of a worldly man on his gross material gain, profit and enjoyment : the concentration of the scientist on his experiments, for instance on the structure of the atom or the constitution of the planet ; the concentration of the psychologist on the movement and laws of thought ; the concentration of the Yogi with his analysis of the ego and the non-ego,—all these are but different forms of concentration, judged from the objective standpoint. But considered from the subjective point of view their contents differ very widely, and they lead to altogether different experiences and results.

The Yogic seeker after Truth, having no faith in God as ordinarily understood, may begin with the concentration and meditation on gross elements associated with time and space, and then take the elements

beyond the limitations of time and space. He may next take up the subtle elements as the objects of his concentration and meditation, at first within time and space, and later on beyond their limits. Proceeding further, he may first make the mind—the 'inner organ'—and afterwards the ego, the object of this concentration and meditation. And knowing the true nature of these objects he ceases to identify himself with these limiting adjuncts, and having come nearer to his Self he enjoys a wonderful state of bliss and illumination.

The Vedantic aspirant who believes in the existence of the Divine, may at the beginning meditate on the physical form of some great holy personality, image or picture or symbolic representation of the Divine, first associated with time and space, and then without these limitations. Advancing further, he may meditate on the 'heart' of the holy personality or on the Divine Mind, and gradually imbibe the noble attributes associated with it. Later, he may pass on to Pure Consciousness, individual or cosmic, and thereby succeed in purifying and expanding his impure, limited consciousness, come in touch with the Infinite Being within his self, and even proceed to the highest Divine Realisation in which the meditator, like a salt-doll coming in contact with the ocean, gets merged into the Absolute Divine Principle. Thus, beginning with different forms of concentration and meditation associated with individualised consciousness, he may reach the highest Super-consciousness—the Absolute Reality, the One Undivided Principle—in which all subject-object relationship, nay, all relativity, is completely transcended.



By themselves concentration and meditation may not have any spiritual value. As already said, they may even be dangerous if the person who practises them has not already attained a certain amount of mental purification and does not continue the process of sublimation at the time. Concentration and meditation become spiritually effective to the extent to which the mind is purified of its dross, of all the dirt and filth and bad impressions and tendencies it has allowed to accumulate through successive evil thoughts and actions. With the attainment of great dispassion and purity alone can the aspirant take up successfully the higher forms of concentration and meditation, ultimately leading to the highest divine experience and freedom.

#### THE GODWARD TURN

Every average person has the capacity to practise concentration and meditation, although these are usually directed towards persons or objects of gain and enjoyment presented to us by the world. In order to follow the spiritual life, no new faculties need be created all of a sudden. The old capacities and tendencies are to be given a Godward turn without diminishing their intensity, and then the worldly man is transformed into a spiritual man. So the true devotee prays, "Lord, may I think of Thee with that strong love which the ignorant cherish for the things of the world, and may that love never cease to abide in my heart."

The ego asserts itself again and again. So, says Sri Ramakrishna, make it the servant of the Lord. Desires and passions refuse to be controlled. Give a Godward turn to them, maintaining their intensity—so advises the spiritual teacher. In-

stead of yearning for the company of men and women, yearn for union with the Divine. See Him in all, but take care that you do not cheat yourself. He alone can satisfy the hunger of the soul. He alone can fill its void and give it permanent peace and joy.

Instead of being angry with those standing in the way of your sense-enjoyment, gross or subtle, be angry with all the obstacles lying in the path to the Divine. Learn to be angry with your lower desires, with your turbulent passions, with your very anger, and avoid them all as your great and relentless enemies. Instead of wishing to possess another 'human doll' or fleeting worldly wealth, covet the Divine and His inexhaustible wealth which can never be lost and is alone able to give abiding peace. So says the Bhagavatam: "Lust, anger, fear, affections, fellowship and friendship, when directed towards the Divine Being, lead to union with the Divine."

At the touch of the philosopher's stone all the base metals of desires and passions, of greed and anger, lose their evil nature and are transmuted into pure devotion bringing Bliss and Immortality to the soul. "Even if the very wicked worships Me,—the Divine—he has rightly resolved. Soon does he become righteous and obtain eternal peace. Boldly canst thou proclaim that My devotee never comes to grief," says the Bhagavad Gita.

Time and again says Sri Ramakrishna, "Give a Godward turn to all your tendencies." Especially in the path of devotion all desires and passions should be consciously given a higher direction without allowing them to decrease in intensity.

**THE PROCESS OF SELF-PURIFICATION**

Let us take for example the question of anger. Why are we angry? Only because someone or something is standing in the way of what we think to be the object of our enjoyment. This is the only reason for all our anger. Always we find that anger is closely connected with the overstressed ego or a strong sense of personality, and without this strong sense of the ego and an inordinate desire for enjoyment, physical and mental, anger could never even rise in our hearts. So this ego, this desire for enjoyment, is the only cause of our becoming angry. If we do not desire any enjoyment, if we do not expect anything from anybody, but just give and act without ever expecting any return, giving up all expectations, there can never be any rise of anger. So we should get angry with our anger and not with others. We should get terribly angry with our desires for sense enjoyment and not with the objects as such. This is the only practical way to uproot anger and eventually eliminate it. And without eliminating anger and other associated evils to a great extent, we can never make any progress in spiritual life. Lust and anger are the two greatest enemies in the spiritual path. So they should be carefully avoided by all aspirants.

Thus, whenever there is anger there is some attachment or other, some inordinate desire or affection, for, truly speaking, without attachment to some person or thing there can never rise any form of anger. It is only our thwarted will to enjoyment that brings about anger. But this should be understood more in a subtle sense than in a gross one. It need not necessarily be any craving for the

grosser forms of enjoyment that lies as the root-cause of anger.

It may happen that a person is fully convinced of the evil effects of desires, but still is not able to rid himself completely of them. What is such a person to do? How can he rise above them? He should connect them all, directly or indirectly, with the Divine, give every desire, every sensual impulse, every passion a Godward turn, consciously and knowingly, with an effort of the will. If he cannot rid himself of the inordinate desire for music, let him listen to devotional or holy music, and all the time he is so doing, let him think of the Divine. If his artistic sense and his desire to enjoy art are very strong, he should take up some holy form of art and make that a stepping stone for rising to the plane of the Divine. If he is very fond of the sweet fragrance and beauty of flowers and wishes to enjoy them, let him pluck the flowers, offer them to the Divine and decorate the holy altar artistically with them. If he desires to love somebody, feel greatly attracted towards somebody, let him love the Divine in that person and be thereby directly drawn towards the Divine. If done consciously and knowingly, all this acts as a great controlling factor, as a great regulating agency, helping us in sublimating our desires and in giving them a higher and higher turn and attaining a greater and greater purity. But even here the ultimate goal to be attained by the aspirant is perfect control and divine realisation of God. Everything else serves only as a stepping-stone to that. Following the graduated steps, we must be able to rise to the highest sooner or later.

Unless all the filth and foulness which have gathered in the mind are removed from it, from all nooks and corners, our problem is not really solved. If some light just enters a room through a chink in the door and the rest of the room remains shrouded in darkness and continues to be dirty, nothing is achieved. There is no real spiritual illumination if just a tiny bit of light enters our mind, and all the dirt and filth lying there is pushed away for the time being into some far-off dark corner. In such a case the man remains just what he was before he had this kind of 'glimpse.' Mere theories and philosophies do not help us in any way, however wonderful they may be. What is essential is the practical application, the sublimation, the removal of all the dirt lying hidden in the dark corners of the mind, not the so-called perfect control of all the mental modifications (*vrittis*) as some people would have it, which only leads to self-induced sleep in the beginner, but not to any form of real illumination. People talking of the complete stopping of all the mental modifications (*Vrittis*) at the very beginning of their spiritual life do not know what they mean.

Very often there is in us only a certain amount of external control, but as distinct from this there should be real internal control. If we are outwardly controlled, but are not able to stop the activity in the sense-organ or in the mind, we can attain to higher forms of control. If the senses have been controlled, but are still eager to come in touch with the sense-objects, real control has not been achieved, but only its outward form. Even then a step has been taken in the right direction.

One form of control is to draw oneself away completely from the objects of the senses. Another form is to allow the senses to come in touch with things that are pure and not likely to harm the aspirant by rousing fresh desires in him. This is the better and easier method for most people..

"O my mind, worship the Mother and repeat day and night the great Mantra (the mystic word) that you have received from your Guru. When you lie down, think you are making prostrations to the Mother. When you sleep, think you are meditating on Her. When you eat, think you are offering food to Her. With great joy Ramprasad proclaims, 'Mother dwells in all bodies. When you walk in the city, think you are going round the Divine Mother.'"

The idea of this beautiful song is this : We must connect consciously every thought and every single act of our life either directly or indirectly with the Divine, and practise the presence of God at all times.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE ALL-PERVADING DIVINE PRINCIPLE

The Divine is everywhere and in everything, but we should learn to discriminate and act accordingly. We should learn to become more wide-awake and conscious. We should be more reflective and act less on the impulse of the senses and our instincts, be they good or bad. We are so careless and easy-going at all this, that we follow the opposite course and bring no end of troubles on ourselves.

We should fully recognise this idea of Unity but in the right way. At present we recognise it so half-

heartedly. And properly speaking, without acquiring true dispassion and detachment we cannot recognise it whole-heartedly and act up to it. If we were convinced that the One Undivided Principle exists in all, we could not have any strong hatred or any strong animal love for anybody, separating him from the rest, but would only turn our eyes towards the Principle at the back of him. This does not mean that we are to behave like fools. No. We still should know the tiger to be a tiger, in spite of its being a manifestation of this One Undivided Principle. So we should not go and shake hands with it. We should know the Principle to be present both in man and woman, but this knowledge should not prevent us from discriminating and being careful so long as we are on this phenomenal plane. We should see the One Principle at the back of the worldly person leading an impure and immoral life, but we should not go and have intimate talks with him. This is very very essential. And if we do not act up to this rule, our feet will slip one day, and we shall seriously come to grief. The aspirant can never be too careful in this. To the extent we recognise the One Undivided Principle in all, our hatred, our so-called human love, our attachment, would be diminished and lose all strength and influence. Wherever we find in an aspirant the desire to mix indiscriminately with worldly minded people and with members of the opposite sex, there is something seriously wrong. His desires for worldly things and enjoyment have not yet lost their tenacity and no purification has been attained. So

spiritual progress and realisation are altogether out of question.

Ordinarily our attachment clouds our whole understanding. We must be able to stress the spirit more than the form, more than the personalities and sense-objects, but so long as our craving for sense-enjoyment, our clinging to this little personality of ours, continues to cloud our understanding, we can never really think of this One Undivided Principle, and thus we go on committing the same old mistakes over and over again. So dispassion should be cultivated as much as possible by all aspirants. Without it nothing positive can be achieved.

Christ says, "He who loves father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." And that is perfectly true. Not only that, but he who allows another to love him more than the Divine is not worthy of God. He who allows another to be more attracted by him than by the Divine is not worthy of God and cannot attain Him. When we make another person love us in such a way by not being sufficiently reserved, we are not worthy of God. So, in this, too, we should be very careful and wide awake. We feel delighted at being flattered, no doubt; we like to be attractive to others; we like being loved by others as objects of enjoyment. But we are too impulsive and too unreflective to know that from the spiritual standpoint we create troubles both for ourselves and for others, and prevent our progress. We should be dignified and well guarded. We should take such an attitude that others do not dare to approach us in a wrong way. In short, we should try to possess greater and greater discrimination.

Dispassion has both its negative and its positive aspect. We should try to disconnect ourselves from others as much as possible and then connect ourselves with the Divine, so that later on all connection with others can be done only through the Divine, but never again in a direct way. Human love connected with the Divine can be gradually transmuted, but if it is not so connected, it degenerates and always ends in disaster and misery, whatever we may think to the contrary. All our relationships, if they be direct relationships, are only born with the body and associated with others through connections of the body only. There is nothing lasting in them that could ever bring peace and real blessedness to any of us.

It is really very strange that people suffer so much, and still they are not brought to their senses, but cling to all these false identifications. Very often we forget the goal and take the means to be the goal. The whole world is bound by the desire for wealth and by the desire for sex. But we should learn to develop a new attitude towards both. We make money the highest goal of our life, and then we come to grief. We make the love of a man or a woman the ultimate aim of our life, and end our life in misery. We should become introspective and know what is the real goal of life, and then try to realise it.

Ordinarily there is in us such an awful identification with our body and our senses and passions that we just brush aside God. Wherever there is scepticism with reference to the Divine, there is some inordinate clinging to the self and to the senses and their objects, because of which

God is pushed out. So long as the individual is full of desire for sense-enjoyment and for possession, of egoism and vanity, God has no place in his life. The Divine is pushed away by our creature-consciousness. If the mind becomes perfectly free from desires and passions, one realises the Divine then and there. So if we do not realise God, if we do not even get a glimpse of the Truth, we need not ask why it is so. We should know that in the conscious and in the sub-conscious mind there are still strong desires in us, and we should first rid ourselves of these obstructions. So long as we allow them to remain, the question of realisation does not even arise.

We should break the sway of our impulses over us. The very moment the impulses rise in us, we should try to expand ourselves, for then these impulses at once disappear just as the waves disappear in the ocean. The man who knows how to expand his consciousness, how to attain a higher form of consciousness, is not affected by such impulses that rise in the mind. One of the most effective means to rise above one's impulses is to come in touch with the Divine Consciousness, with that Infinite presence which is always in us. And without knowing how to rise above our instincts, without knowing how to control and curb our passions and to cultivate true renunciation and dispassion, without having tried to attain to the purity of mind and of body, there can be no spiritual life for any one. So we should become more reflective and more discriminating. We are not consistent enough in our thinking and in our actions. There should never be any haziness in the Vedantic aspirant.

Vagueness and indefiniteness have no place in true spiritual life. Everything should be clear. We must have definite and right thoughts, definite and right emotions and feelings, definite and right actions. Then alone can we proceed to the Divine Goal and realise it.

## PARADOX

*By E. E. Speight*

You may buy gold too dear,  
Far off may be too near,  
Things you long for be too strong  
for  
Words to make them clear.

Water can mould a rock,  
A thought can kill with shock,  
A sudden light conceal as night  
The shepherd from the flock.

Things can be said unsaid,  
Alive can yet be dead,  
Lovers of home the first to roam,  
And leaders best when led.

Truth may be untruth too,  
Yourself be more than you,  
To bring to birth the greatest worth  
The easiest to do.

Deny yourself, and power  
Is with you every hour,  
And in a trance our spirits  
chance  
On truth in perfect flower.

There is no going hence  
Without a coming thence ;  
The restless sea can somehow be  
A tranquil permanence.

Croesus will grudge a crumb,  
Christ toils in a slum;

Young hearts and fair we least can  
spare  
Go forth to martyrdom.

A hurricane says naught,  
A whisper can be fraught  
With mighty things; a robin sings  
The happiest of thought.

Who fears the dark fears light,  
Our day is ringed with night,  
From innocence we struggle hence  
In ignorance to fight.

No outer, then no inner,  
No loss in life, no winner ;  
Through pine and pain our souls we  
gain ;  
A good-man loves a sinner.

The world, though wealth is grow-  
ing,  
May perish by not knowing ;  
What love should do to lead us  
through,  
To guide our undergoing.

Lovers of solitude  
Long most for brotherhood ;  
Who seeks a song amid the throng  
Wanders a lonely wood.

The mind has made the whole  
We call the world ; the Soul  
Builds the walls of heaven's halls,  
And takes the sternest toll.

# THE BUDDHA

*By Prof. Dr. Heinrich Zimmer*

*(Continued from previous issue)*

[Dr. Zimmer is one of the well-known orientalists of Germany. The present article is a translation from German. We are indebted to Dr. V. N. Sharma, Ph.D., (Heidel) for the translation.]

**W** E ought not to belittle the radical significance of the second truth of Buddhism, otherwise one sees in the third and fourth truths nothing but mere definitions and values of estimations ; moreover, when we put the four truths together for our test, we would find that they are nothing but historical appearance. To put forward the bold assumption, to take life as it expresses itself as an exceptional unwished biological condition, rather than valuing its essence and its regulating process as other religious founders and teachers did, this assumption is for India neither an absurdity nor an arrogance. This second truth follows the traditional path of medical diagnosis, and as such, it stands absolutely behind the shadows of the third truth. This diagnosis might appear to some of us, as if it is touching the domains of insanity. However, it loses its acuteness, for the third truth says that the suffering is curable.

And he who expressed this, is he, who was cured, and it is he who points out the way of healing. And this way is just as real as the suffering and as the therapy of curable illnesses.

This way joins the path of the fourth of the supreme realities in which are embodied the foundations of the oldest Buddhism, and around which flow the rich streams of the later teachings of the Buddhist

school. It is a way of the innermost experiences, not of a world-construction which one could own by mere thinking and believing. It is not an all-embracing social organisation, yet, a diet, a regime of the whole man as it corresponds to the medical condition. This can be chosen either by the few or by the many. Here we find the positive aspect of Buddhism. Here one beholds the rule of the monk or the life's form of the Bodhisatva—of the Becoming Buddha—amidst the world. What one reads in the voluminous literature and philosophical thought is nothing but only a gleam of this spiritual essence ; it is only a foreground, a portal, yes a portal, which leads to the other portal ; it is only a sign that points out the way, yet, it is not the name, not the root.

The star of Buddhism appears over the horizon of the old India, after her immemorial, pre-Aryan archaic, highest culture of great achievements. In the excavations that have been undertaken in the Indus valley, one sees the marvellous cities of three thousand years old. In these one finds a clay plate which depicts the figure of an ascetic, adorned both by men and gods, sitting in the position of Buddha. One can behold in this mythical and yet symbolical figure, that Sakhyamuni is not the first and the only Buddha. He is one of the youngest ones, yet

not the last. For India Buddha gives a new life, a new light to the pre-Aryan conception of an ascetic and of a teacher.

The time of Buddha has a great significance in the political and philosophical life of India. The supremacy of the Aryan Brahmanism, which has ruled the land for one and a half thousand years, has abdicated itself, and the heritage of the pre-Aryan spiritual culture expresses itself in different voices. Its cosmology and its understanding of the human personality are more rich and complex than the Aryan theology, and the ritual and magic of the Brahmanism. The process of assimilation between the two greatest cultures takes now a new shape; the two streams of mythical, magical thoughts find now their confluence in this new stadium. The atmosphere is filled everywhere with speculations, ecstasies, and with great visions. On this horizon of metaphysical thought, appears the therapy of the Buddha.

Buddhism, in other words, means to India the critical stage for the furtherance of the dogmatic thought, both in the sphere of the metaphysics as well as in the field of materialism. On one side metaphysics ruled the mind of the land with its philosophy that in all passing things there exists one being, which is divine and immortal. The domain of theology had its foundation on this. On the other side the materialism broadcasted, laying special emphasis on the outer form, that all living beings and forms might vanish. The Buddha shows us through his "middle path" the possibility of bringing together the two extreme thoughts of metaphysics and materialism that fought against

one another and that could not be overwhelmed by each other. In this apodictical sphere Buddha's contribution is the hypothetical judgment that nothing is, or is not, but everything is relative. However, this relativity lies in our own self. Our "Not Knowing It Better" stipulates a specific reality; it is a sphere of World and I, in which we are quite at home. This world is not an indispensable reality, for, it is a function of our own naivety. Hence it is curable.

To be Awakened means, most probably, to be aware that everything is absolutely conditioned. Thus it is a function of our own self. Having attained this knowledge we are indeed masters of all the functions; therefore we are free from all disturbances, we are sovereigns and healthy.

An outsider might see only an absolute dynamical psychology in this, but Buddha's contribution is the rejection of all aspects of substantial psychology, and of all metaphors within time and space in the world of the soul. This is the historical message of Buddhism to Asia.

The reality in which we live is a mere convention of the "Not Knowers It Otherwise." Behind this there is another reality, in which the first one dissolves itself. This is undefinable; it is without a form; it is free from all limitations and contradictions. It cannot be expressed, yet it can be experienced in its function. Therefore you cannot express it with your language. Even the word "Nirvana" is a mere picture so as to point out a process of dissolution. It is like a bridge, of which the column of this side is still to be seen, but not that



of the other side. Therefore it is a mere metaphor, nothing more than this.

Both language and spirit can bring home this secret only by means of paradoxes. So did the Buddhists. They used paradoxes as the finest and clearest way of their instruction. A paradox can lead one to something which is behind form and name. The Awakened calls his method of instruction, a path or a vehicle, a ship that brings the people unhurt over the bridgeless streams of India to the shore beyond. The Buddha once used a parable of a man who is standing on a shore full of horror and dangers. On the other side lies the land of everlasting peace and harmony. With many a difficulty he succeeds in building a float of wood and weed that carries him safely to the other side. Now the Buddha asked his disciples :

"Would that man be clever if he would keep this float, because it saved him ; and take it on his back and carry it through the land ?"

"O Master," answered the disciples, "he should leave it on the stream, which lies behind him."

"So shall the teaching be considered," concluded the Buddha. "It is helpful so as to enable one escape, but not to keep it for oneself."

To him who can perfect himself, can reach the goal, no more teaching is needed. Formulas which have now lost their significance are mere milestones that lie behind him who reached the goal. Everything that can be

expressed of this process is therapy. The cured does not need it any longer.

He who wanders understands that the teaching is something which changes itself. It is indeed a path that traverses through many a landscape. In other words it is a function in itself. What one considers so essential in the beginning, will not be so important at the end. As such one will have to consider also the moral aspect only as a guiding principle that changes itself along with one's own change in the path of healing.

The teaching is considered as the vehicle. All other spiritual worlds must be left on this side of the shore. From here begins the pilgrimage. There is no necessity to discuss them, but to leave them behind. On this lies their uniqueness and their passing significance. Therefore Buddhism takes, as its basis, the tradition, faith and morals of the races. This spiritual shore of the stream from which one leaves is called in Asia religion. Looked at from this angle of vision, Buddhism seems to be religion too, as it assimilated the essence of Hinduism of India, as well as Shintoism of Japan, even though it ought to be considered as a therapeutical process of healing of the whole personality. Buddhism, through its readiness to welcome the spiritual riches from all sides, understood always the ways of the world, but it used them only as mere steps on its forward path.

(To be continued)



## THE GLORY OF MOTHERHOOD

*By Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M.A.*

[Mr. Sen Gupta is a Professor of English. He presents his ideal of womanhood in a very striking form and with much literary beauty.]

**T**HERE is no one on earth who convinces me more of the goodness and wisdom of God than does a mother. Philosophers have advanced arguments and proofs, some for, and some against, the existence of God. Those who believe in Him point to Nature and her holy plan. The starry heavens impressed Kant with God's infinity and glory. The beauty of a flower spoke to Wordsworth's ears its message of an indwelling spirit that gives life and hue to all that lives. But those who do not believe in God or His goodness will refer to the nebulous masses in the heavens as still pointing to a chaos which is evolving itself, more by accident and fortuitous concourse of blind atoms, than by any divine law or intelligence. They will point to Nature "red in tooth and claw", and to instances of what appear to them as meaningless and heartless. Not being a philosopher, I may not enter into a discussion of the matter. But yet I would, with humility, ask the philosophers to turn to a mother's ways, beginning from the animal world and ascending to the world of man. How could they explain her love and affection, her sacrifice and suffering for her child? Does not a mother's love for her child serve as the best reminder of the existence, behind and in creation, of a Power who is at once infinitely wise and good? Rightly did the English novelist Bulwer Lytton say, and that so aptly and beautifully, "Nature's

loving proxy, the watchful Mother". Look at another wonderful saying—it was a Jewish saying—"God could not be everywhere, therefore He made mothers".

In a country where a mother's love has been enshrined in society and religion as the most sacred thing on earth, one need not be at pains to prove the glory of motherhood. What could have heightened that glory more than the belief in the Motherhood of God? Some have worshipped God as a Ruler, some as a Father. But the Mother cult is the sweetest that it so easily overpowers the heart. Even the keen and austere Kesab Chandra, we know, was enchanted by this creed which the Sage of Dakshineswar had realised and imparted to him. Do we not know the thrill of joy and devotion that passes through us, when the benign Mother is worshipped in autumn? Nature then appears so mellow and kind, so bright and pure, looking and staring at us with the love of a mother that has come, after a long spell of absence, to see her children!

One need only look within to feel the truth of this—the mighty influence of the Mother cult in religion.

It is often said that we do not know in this country how to honour our womanfolk.. No slander was more unfair than this. To see the mother in a woman is the highest honour that could be bestowed on her, and do we not submit ourselves

to our mothers most willingly and loyally and show them the homage which is their due? Does not a mother still rule us all our lives? To honour a woman does not necessarily mean to help her to shine in society. Would it be honouring her less, when we instal her as the ruling goddess of the family life, as the Deity in the Temple, whom we do not want to be sullied by the rough touch of the work-a-day world? It sounds perhaps medieval to speak in this strain to-day. But, it is better to be medieval with the glory of the mother preserved in all its halo than to be modern to see that halo lost in the light of common day, better far to see the race of mothers glorying in thier ancient reign over us than to see them scrambling for bread and other rights in an unseemly fight with their sons! I am told in new Germany Hitler does not offer employment to a girl but asks her to marry and be a mother. If this is true, it is a move in the right direction.

I certainly do not want—let me not be misunderstood—our women to relapse into a state of isolation from the world currents of thought and progress. Nor am I blind to the facts that their powers and potentialities are such as may work miracles and that human civilisation must be a harmony of the joint efforts of both men and women. The ancient idea that a woman's sphere of work was within the four walls of domestic life and that of man, outside, will no longer hold good. Those walls have happily been pulled down and men and women are now both out, shoulder to shoulder, in the common theatre and arena of activity, in the fulfilment of God's

design. All this is true. But we must not, at the same time, ignore the fact that a woman is above all a mother and her glory and power are best seen to shine in that capacity. She may of course shine in the different spheres of public or social life—she may be a prosperous lawyer or a sound statesman. She may excel in all these but do these put the right label on her true self? She must show the best in her as a mother—her tenderness, her purity, her sacrifice, her forgiveness, must be there to help man. She must be above man's selfishness and cruelty, his hypocrisy and cunning. If the race of mothers, which women *par excellence* are, die out before a race of mere intellectualists and fighters, the world would ere long come to be reduced to a vast orphanage where our souls would pine and be famished and we would all hurry on to our ruin. With all her mental vigour or acquisitions, a woman must also show that she is our mother and so is able to put down the brute in man. She is to bless our endeavours and to protect us from the pit-falls of life. While we are out fighting for our rights busy killing and destroying our neighbours, let her stand out in her true glory and save us, teaching us how to realise our fraternity and unity. The world, with all its apparent progress, is still as bad as it was in days, when "everyman's hand was on his neighbour". We are still busy multiplying weapons of war inspite of the League of Nations, inspite of a Maeterlinck or a Romain Rolland, or a Rabindranath. This is because the mothers of the human race have been asleep. An American merchant once said, "If you would

reform the world from its errors and vices, begin by enlisting the mothers".

I say, "Let the mothers wake up and form themselves into a League, then will the endeavours of the League of Nations be truly blessed and man be assured of his prosperity".

Let us learn to see and honour the motherhood of a woman and so glorify her and society.

A quotation from Martin Luther, will not be found out of place :—

"When Eve was brought unto Adam, he became filled with the Holy Spirit, gave her the most sanctified, the most glorious of appellations. He called her Eva, that is to say, the Mother of All. He did not style her wife, but simply mother—mother of all living creatures. In this consists the glory and the most precious ornament of woman".

## SAINT RAMAVALLABHA DAS

*By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.*

[Mr. Chandavarkar gives some account of the life and teachings of a saint of Maharashtra.]

**T**HE history of the eternal struggle of the finite to become one with the Infinite presents many interesting, informative and instructive chapters. To keep the human soul in tune with Infinite, the seers or the Rishis of the Aryan race have formulated certain postulates. For the guidance of the various aspirants they have recommended the practice of Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga or the Bhakti Yoga, according to the qualification of the aspirants. The mere awakening of a desire to know the Infinite (*Brahma Jijnasa*) leads one to follow any one of these three paths leading to that goal.

Of the followers of the Bhakti Yoga there has been a remarkable line of outstanding saints in the medieval period of Indian History. In that eventful period there has been a glorious revival of the Bhakti cult. We call it a revival because the roots of the Bhakti movement can be traced to such early times as of Prahlada and Sri Krishna. From those hoary days to the time of Sri

Ramakrishna, there has been a galaxy of saints in different parts of India. From their life and teaching it becomes amply evident that the path of knowledge could be tread only by aspirants who are specially competent, the path of devotion or the *Bhakti Marga* is ever the easiest and the safest for one and all. These saints therefore worked a wonderful revolution among the masses. That awakening of the masses, be it spiritual or moral, was, doubtless, the result of the indefatigable labours of these benefactors of humanity. In this essay we propose to deal with the life of one such saint, incidentally dealing with his work also.

Saint Ramavallabha Das was born in the Maratha country, but worked in the Kanarese districts on the west coast of India. He was destined to be 'a servant of Lord Krishna' who preached the Bhakti Marga to the world through the Gita, a book that is rightly called the Bible of humanity.

Near Aurangabad, there is the historic fort of Devagiri or Daulatabad. In the sixteenth century of the Shalivahan Era, it was held by a Muslim king, who had a minister by name Ambar Khan. The manager of his office was one Ambajipant Raleraskar. Although he was fairly happy in his domestic life he had no issue. This fact made him seek the blessings of his family deity Jagadamba. It is said that owing to the special favour of the Goddess, late in life was born to him a son who was destined to be a great Sadhu. The child was given the happy name of Tukopant. In his seventh year, according to the custom, he was invested with the sacred thread and in the twelfth year he was prematurely ushered into the Grihastashrama (the life of the householder). The marriage however did not, and could not, prove a hindrance to the spiritual progress of the boy. In his eighteenth year he succeeded to his father's post. Just after sometime, it is recorded that the fort of Devagiri was besieged by a huge army of the Northern Muslims. The chief of the fort was bewildered by that unexpected invasion. His army consisted only of 1500 Infantry and 700 Cavalry, and it could not face 12,000 cavalry and 13,000 Infantry. In that unhappy situation he consulted the Vizier, who, being a brave soldier, himself organised a small army of loyal and desperate fighters, among whom Tukopant was one, and went to meet the formidable foe. The result was that the enemy was completely routed and they fled from the field. The next day the victorious army returned with the booty. While others brought silver and gold, our Tukopant picked up a copy of

Shrimad Bhagavata. With great reverence he began to study it. This made a mighty revolution in his mental outlook ; gradually a new light dawned upon him. Tuko may thus be called a soldier-saint.

The profound study of the Bhagavata filled our Tukopant with Vairagya dispassion. Service as another's employee had no attraction for him. For pelf and power, or for name and fame he cared not. If Prahlad gave up his father, if Vibhishna abandoned the cause of Ravana, if Bharata disobeyed his mother, it was for the sake of the ideal. Tukopant too felt the keen necessity of bidding farewell to his fond parents for the sake of Bhakti or divine love. One fine morning he left his home in search of a Guru who would initiate him into the mysteries of the Unknown. From this moment began his perigrinations. The earnest aspirant as he was, Tuko found his Guru in one Laksmidharadas who was staying in an Ashrama on the bank of the Godavari river. Tukopant was given the new name of Sri Ramavallabhadas by his Guru, and he was taught *Gopalavidya* which illumined his mind.

Not content with finding solace for himself, he thought of communicating that bliss to the world outside and with this noble object he started on his sacred mission. At Nasik, he met one Sadhu by name Gopal Goswami. Here he met also his old friend Krishnajeepant and the trio began in right earnest the practice of Bhakti Yoga. Ekanathi Bhagavat was profoundly studied by them. After some time he went to Vayce in Berar, which was a rendezvous for many Bhaktas. One interesting story is narrated in connexion with

his meeting with another Sadhu by name Umavallabhadas, who, as his name indicates, was a staunch devotee of Siva. While he was staying in a temple dedicated to Mahadeva, once a discussion arose between these two Bhaktas. While the one argued Shiva was the superior deity, the other vehemently declared that Krishna was the superior. The story goes that next morning the deity appeared to Ramavallabhadas in the form of Mahadeva, and to Umavallabha He appeared in the form of Krishna. Both were lost in wonder. They came to the conclusion that both were the forms of one and the same God, and that in diversity there is unity. The differences are practically without any distinctions. These are all man-made artificial differences. From Vayee Kshetra, Ramavallabhadas proceeded to Konkan, where he began the exposition of Sri Shankaracharya's Brihadvakyavritti with his commentary in Prakritabhasha. Later on, he went to Gokarna, a famous place of pilgrimage in the North Kanara District. During the Shivaratri festival here thousands of pilgrims gather, among whom was a Saraswat lady by name Lakshmi Bai. At the time of her taking the sea-bath she chanced to lose her earring which was a sign of auspiciousness. The lady was standing aghast at the loss. Near by was our saint watching the lady in deep sorrow. When the reason was explained to him, she was commanded to throw the remaining one also and invoke the blessings of Kubera. The devout lady without any hesitation threw away the other jewel also and began her prayers. Lo, in the very presence of the saint, both the ear-rings

were washed to her feet. Her joy knew no bounds. She fell at his feet and implored him to go over with her to a village called Mallapur, near Kumta. The Sadhu forthwith accompanied her to her native village and preached to her his Gopalavidya. Even to this day at the temple dedicated to Sri Krishna, this very *Vrata* is consistently followed by the members of the Chandavarkar family, of which this lady was the earliest member. She originally belonged to the Nagar Samasthana now in the State of Mysore where her husband was said to be the Dewan. The Krishna Jayanti *Vrata* is now followed just in the manner it was preached by the Sadhu 300 years ago.

The songs composed by this saint are full of Bhakti-rasa to which a brief reference will be made later in this paper. Here it would be enough to record that Mr. Subrao Gopal Ubhayakar, a descendant of this Avadee's family—that was the name given to Lakshmi Bai—has published many of the scholarly works of Sri Ramavallabhadas, which alone form the sources of any biography of this Krishna Bhakta. Some of his works are highly philosophical and also full of Bhakti-rasa. In the section dealing with his philosophy reference will be made to some of these valuable works.

The exact date when Sri Ramavallabhadas shook off the mortal coil is not known. The event must have taken place somewhere near Pandharpur on Ahada-Ekadashi. His philosophy is embodied in some of his works.

(1) On the Bhagavat Gita, he has a very valuable commentary called "*Chamatkari Teeka*". The Marati

style of it is as simple and expressive as the thought is sublime. The illustrations used for the exposition are so homely that every reader knowing Marathi must be able to grasp and enjoy the sublimity of the subject matter. (2) *Krishnajayanti Vratukatha*.—This book deals with the esoteric meaning of Sri Krishna's teachings, the allegorical significance of Radha's love, and the importance of the *Utsava*. (3) *Vakiavritti Teeka* on the Bhagavata and a lucid commentary on the Tenth Skandha called *Dashaka Nirdhara*. The commentary is in the form of a poem. (4) *Vaishnava Gati* is another of his works on the Bhakti-marga.

All these works are in Marathi and are very popular in the Konkan District right upto the South Kanara District.

The saint lays great emphasis on Bhakti-marga. He has ably dealt with the nine-fold path of Bhakti. The term used by him is *Navavidha-Bhakti*. The nine-fold path consists of the following :—

(1) *Shravanam* : Hearing of the glory of God ; (2) *Keertanam* : Singing the praise of God ; (3) *Vishno-smaranam* : Constant meditation of God ; (4) *Padaseva* : Service ; (5) *Arachanam* : Worship of God ; (6) *Vandanam* : Salutation ; (7) *Dasya* : Disintegrated loyalty to God ; (8) *Sakhyam* : Companionship ; (9) *Atmanivedanam* : Self-surrender.

Having spoken of the significance of the nine-fold aspects of Bhakti, he advocates the worship of God as endowed with attributes (*Sagunopasana*). Pandharpur is a place sacred to the deity Vittal. When asked where Vittoba is, he remarked : Vittoba, no doubt resides in Pandharpur

but when we apply the ointment of Gurukripa (grace of a spiritual guide) to our eyes, Vittoba seems to pervade the whole universe. Vishwa, the universe, is the Pandharpur and Vittoba is the soul of that universe. Again in another hymn of his, he says : My Pandharpur is here only. I need not go far. When He pervades every atom in the universe how can we say that He is far from us ? "Speaking of the need for self-surrender" he remarks : "Oh God, I have surrendered my whole body to you. Save me, or ruin me. You can make the poor rich and the rich poor. But I know this for certain, that when I have entire faith in you, I have no cause for any kind of fear. I live and have my being in you. I pray that my *Dehabuddhi* (body-consciousness) be destroyed and *Atma-buddhi* (Self-consciousness) be given unto me. "I am He. One can sing the glory of Hari, only when he is Hari himself." "God is One. Some call him Ganesha, some say he is Ravisha but they fail to realise that He is only One without a second." Always think of Om. That is the Bija. Seek the Guru in right earnest. Through him hear ; get the confirmation through the Sadhus ; take Viveka and then realise. When can one obtain the Guru ? When one begins to practise Viveka (sense of discrimination), renunciation and concentration, Guru of his own accord will bless him and lead him to bliss. These are some of the gems of 'purest ray serene' scattered through his works.

Saint Ramavallabhadhas carried on the work of Ekanath, Jnanadeva and Tukarama in the Kanarese districts on the Malabar coast. He brought the message to the door of every one,

both high and low. He appealed to the emotion of the seekers. In the murky corners, the torch was lighted up. The doors of Mukti was thrown open for all. It is therefore that he can be classified among the benefactors of humanity. Almost all his works are in Marathi and demand a

careful perusal, at least through translations. He seems to have been a scholar in Sanskrit as well. His piety, earnestness of purpose, desire to do good to others and above all his profound and marvellous songs are all admirable, nay, they are soul-stirring.

## PRESENT TENDENCIES IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

*By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D.*

[The following is a review of "Contemporary Indian Philosophy" edited by S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, and published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 375. Price 16sh. net.]

### I

**W**HILE the dictators who are the captains of power presiding over the destinies of nations, are spreading the cult of hate, it is salutary to find that philosophers are keen on bringing about intellectual co-operation and 'a better mutual understanding between the whole mind of East and West.' Adolph and Benito may take a pride in dividing humanity into hostile camps; but no sincere seeker of truth can help registering his feeble voice of protest against the forces that make for evil in this world. As an attempt to launch a counter-attack on the fissiparous tendencies that we find to-day, as an outstanding contribution towards the achievement of a harmonious relationship between the East and the West and as an indication that the Occident has come to realise the perennial delight of Indian Philosophy, thinkers all over the world will welcome the publication of 'Contemporary Indian Philosophy' by the Editor of the Library of Philosophy. Lovers of philosophical knowledge will feel grateful to

Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Prof. J. H. Muirhead for editing this volume which brings out in an eminent way that present-day philosophy in India, far from being a traditional theology or blind formalism, is rich with fresh flower and fruit.

The general editor in his Foreword commending the volume says that it removes effectively certain misconceptions about Indian Philosophy. That the dreamy Indian mystic dwells in the cloudland of fancy without any sense of reality is one of the widespread notions in the West. But as Prof. Muirhead writes, "Contrary to what is usually thought of the remoteness from practice of Indian philosophy, what here strikes one is the lively sense of its practical value." And, again, none of the expositions of philosophy in this volume is the outcome of a narrowness of outlook. To quote Prof. Muirhead, "Another equally striking feature (again contradictory to popular views) is the spirit of tolerance that breathes in their teaching—the conviction that it is one truth that is expressed in all forms of anything



that can be called in the true sense of religion." This is in the true spirit and tradition of the Upanishadic philosophy.

Though we have in this volume different world views, we notice running through them all unshakable faith in the Spirit which is the source and solace of all-that-which-is. Some of the writers expound directly the Vedic tradition, and the others give a critical exposition of Indian thought in the light of metaphysical and scientific developments in the West. But all of them are true to the spirit of the Vedic tradition and they tell us what they consider to be the true function and content of philosophy. We can do no better than give here a resume of the philosophical tendencies that are to be found in the various essays of this book.

## II

In reply to the questionnaire sent to him, Mahatma Gandhi gives a brief statement of his philosophy of life. His religion is Hinduism which, according to him, is religion of humanity including the best of all known religions. Truth is God; and we are all sparks of Truth. The way to the goal lies through continuous and continuing service of all life. How refreshing it is to hear the naked Fakir tell us in words reminiscent of the Upanishadic seers, "In this scheme there is nothing low, nothing high. For, all is one, though we *seem* to be many" !

## III

Dr. Tagore's religion is essentially a poet's religion. The real artist that he is, he regards the world as the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image-making. The universe with

its rhythm and harmony is the work of the Master-Artist. "The vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing."

Mahatma Gandhi tells us that Reality is Truth, and Dr. Tagore sings the song of the Beautiful; but both of them know that Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth.

## IV

Swami Abhedananda expounds the philosophy of Vedanta as he has received it from his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, "the embodiment of the Absolute Truth of the highest philosophy, as well as of Universal Religion which underlies all sectarian religions of the world". The Swami compares the system of Vedanta with the Kantian system and finds it to be more critical and more sublime. The uniqueness of this philosophy lies in its assertion of non-difference of the Jiva from Brahman. "The self or Atman, the true nature of the ego or Jivatma, is one with the essence of Divinity (Brahman) which is absolutely pure, perfect, immortal, unchangeable and one. No philosopher, not even Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel or Schopenhauer, has reached that height of philosophic thought".

The Swami disputes the view which confuses the doctrine of Maya with Illusionism, and says that Maya is the power which produces time, space and causation, as also the phenomenal appearances which exist on the relative plane. The Advaitin, however, need not fight shy of the word 'illusion'. The world is nothing more than an illusory manifestation brought about by Maya.

Iswara is the arch-juggler whose magical feat is this universe. Illusion does not mean nullity or Sunya. The nature of the world, as that of Maya, its parent, is indeterminable. It is not unreal because it appears ; It is not real because it is sublated ; and it cannot be both real and unreal because of contradiction.

## V

Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya, to whom an explication of the concept of philosophy appears more important than the discussion of any specific philosophical problem, begins his essay by stating wherein he differs from Kant. For Kant the self is a necessity of thought and the object of moral faith, but it is not in itself knowable. The Professor thinks that, while the self is unthinkable, while it is not actually known and is only an object of faith, there is the possibility of knowing it without thinking. Thinking is only one of the ways of knowing. Though the self is not an object of thought, it can be known.

Only one of the forms of theoretic consciousness is literal thought. All the others are symbolistic thought which should not be called thought at all. "Four forms or grades of thought may be distinguished. They may be roughly called empirical thought, pure objective thought, spiritual thought and transcendental thought". The content of empirical thought is fact which is dealt with by science. Philosophy studies the contents of the other three forms of thought which are respectively self-subsistence, reality and truth. The facts of science are actually known and literally thought. The contents of philosophy are not literally thinkable and are not actually known, but

are believed as demanding to be known without being thought.

Corresponding to the three grades of theoretic consciousness there are three grades of philosophy which the Professor calls philosophy of the object, philosophy of the subject and philosophy of truth. The philosophy of the object deals with the self-subsistent object which is intelligible only in reference to the subject. The philosophy of the spirit has to do with the spiritual or enjoying consciousness of objectivity as a symbol of the real subject. "The study of all contents enjoyed in explicit reference to the subject. 'I', may be called the philosophy of the spirit." The attitude of the philosophy of truth is neither objective nor subjective. Truth is to be distinguished from reality in that while the latter is enjoyed the former is not. "What is called the absolute is a positively believed entity that is only negatively understood." It is conceived rigorously as truth in (Advaita) Vedanta.

## VI

Common sense Empiricism is the name by which Prof. G. C. Chatterji calls his philosophy. Philosophy should not be divorced from life. It is a natural activity springing from some abiding human need or purpose. Sundered from experience, philosophy would be no more than barren formalism and mental gymnastics. In the words of Prof. Chatterji, "Philosophy begins in concrete experience, and must return to concrete experience in the character of guide or mentor, but in the actual solution of its problems it must remain unbiased by considerations of utility or subjective satisfaction."

The Professor who is averse to all brands of Idealism rejects the Hege-

lian dictum that the real is rational. But this denial of Idealism does not mean that he supports the doctrine of Materialism. To him reality is rich with variety. Experience reveals three phases of objective reality which he calls external nature, other minds and values. Philosophy cannot offer any explanation of the origin, destiny and future of the universe, for experience which is its criterion and touchstone is incomplete. Religion and philosophy have the same content, though their attitudes differ. Consistently with the philosophy of Empiricism, religion is to be regarded as a suspense of judgment on final issues.

The Professor is right when he is hard on solipsism and Berkeleyan Idealism whose logical conclusion is Humeian skepticism. But it is open to question whether a faith in a timeless Absolute lulls us to a spirit of happy acquiescence in the intellectual, social and moral muddle in which man from his finite point of view appears to be involved. It will be interesting to note that the philosophy of Advaita equates experience with the Absolute—experience not in the narrow sense of the term, but experience taken in its totality. As Bharatitirtha, an eminent exponent of Advaita, observes: When the self is conditioned by objects, it is spoken of as experience; and when the adjuncts are not intended, it is called the Absolute.

## VII

Writing on the Pertinence of Philosophy, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy defines philosophy, after the ancient Greeks, as the love of wisdom. As contrasted with science whose sphere lies in particular departments of knowledge, philosophy is a wisdom

about knowledge. But there can be a reconciliation of science and religion. "Each is then dependent on the other, although in different ways; the sciences depending on revealed truth for their formal correction, and revealed truth relying upon the sciences for its demonstration by analogy, 'not as though it stood in need of them, but only to make its teaching clearer'."

It is not possible to divide religion from metaphysics, though they may be distinguished. The distinction between religion and metaphysics, writes the learned Doctor, "is that of Christianity from Gnosticism, Sunni from Shia doctrine, Ramanuja from Sankara, of the will from the intellect, participation (bhakti) from gnosis (jnana), or knowledge-of (avidya) from knowledge-as (vidya)." Religion would be unintelligible without the postulation of duality; and religions may and must be many because of difference in the modes of knowing God. But metaphysics is the common ground, the basis and norm of all religious formulations. Ultimately, however, both religion and philosophy are identical. "Both, considered as ways or praxis, are means of accomplishing the rectification, regeneration and reintegration of the aberrant and fragmented individual consciousness; both conceive of man's last end (purushartha) as consisting in a realisation by the individual of all the possibilities inherent in his own being." For all the great thinkers and mystics of the world, religious and intellectual experience are too closely interwoven ever to be wholly divided.

## VIII

Dr. Bhagavan Das believes in (1) infinitely countless individual selves

or souls; in (2) their rebirths—the passing of each self, through all the possible experiences, in infinite time, space and motion; in (3) cycles and circles of time and space on all possible scales of duration and extent, in which the process of rhythmic evolution and involution manifest themselves; in (4) one all-including, all-pervading, ever-complete, timeless, spaceless, universal Soul also identical with and including within Itself all the countless individual selves, and whose eternally changeless, and yet also ever-changing, Ideation the entire world-process of all souls and bodies is.

The faith to which Dr. Bhagavan Das subscribes is *Atma-vidya*. The first three articles of his faith refer, we believe, to the relative reality of the world with its irreconcilable dualisms. They cannot be on a par with the fourth which alone is the real doctrine of the self. The Doctor records his faith in Advaita when he says that nescience is the root of all misery and that true knowledge (*Vidya*) of the identity of the Jiva with the supreme self removes all fear and sorrow. Vedanta or the final knowledge, as he says, is not only a theory or set of beliefs but also a philosophy which sees and worships the One in all animate and seemingly inanimate nature. But on that account, can we say that it is Jnana-bhakti-karma, knowledge-devotion-works, all in one? If nescience be the cause of all misery, then it is only Jnana (distinctionless cognition or intuitive experience) that should be regarded as the direct means to release. Devotion and works can at best be auxiliaries. The Doctor strikes the true note of

Vedanta when he writes, "From the standpoint of Final Knowledge (*Vedanta*), the ultimate and sole Truth and Reality as well as Ideality is the Absolute, and the relative or comparative truths and falsehoods distinguished by scientific logic are both unreal, illusory (*Maya*)".

## IX

Prof. Surendranath Dasgupta who is sick of Absolutism desires that philosophy be grounded on experience, either direct or indirect. To him the Bradleian Absolute is no experience at all, as it is never felt or realised. There is no experience which is absolute or self-valid. The Professor criticises the doctrine of self-validity of knowledge, and defines validity as the consonance of an awareness with what it proposes to be. "There are two forms of validity: (1) that which establishes its right by an implicit or an explicit history of reference to the structure of our experience woven out in association with the experiences of others, (2) that which emerges out by itself borne on the shoulders, as it were, of a previous mental history of a different order".

Consistent with his philosophy of Dependent Emergence, Prof. Dasgupta disagrees with the *Sat-karyavada* and regards the effect with the *Naiyayika* and the *Bauddha*, as a new emergence. In the place of the changeless self or *Sakshi* there is to be found only a composite self, an integrated whole, as a part of the bigger mental whole. The self not only grows but may change its nature at different times as a result of the mental history, as also on account of environmental influences, and on the occasion of diverse kinds

of apperceptions. In some systems of modern evolutionary philosophy, space-time has been regarded as the ultimate original nature. But since space-time also, in the view of Prof. Dasgupta, is a relational whole, there must be some level of which it is a product. That level is the level of our ultimate relational terms. At different levels different emergents are projected. The relational complex we call animal is of an entirely different order from the relational complexes of the material order. "As life advances from the vegetable to the animal and from the lower animals to the highest, the human, we have a gradual advance of a multi-fold differentiation of functions and activities which all work in a selective harmonious manner leading to the development of the body and the reproduction of similar bodies in it in endless series". When the mind emerges from the biological basis and finds itself in commerce with other minds, there arises a new non-biological purpose which is Love. The emergent forms of value point towards the apex, God, who is neither the architect of the universe nor the fulfiller of our wishes. He "emerges within and through our value-sense, pulling us up in and through the emergent ideals", and with him we feel united in the deepest bonds of love.

### X

Dr. Hiralal Halder advocates Realistic Idealism. The Berkeleyan position that to be is to be perceived is, he says, unassailable. "The objective world can no more exist apart from mind than can the outside of a thing exist in isolation from its inside". But from the right pre-

mise that nothing is real apart from mind, as Dr. Hiralal observes, Berkeley draws the wrong conclusion that everything is reducible to the ideas of the mind. "If to be is to be perceived, it is equally true that to be perceived is to be". Reality is neither mind alone nor matter alone. It is the source and presupposition, the truth of both. "The material world is inwardised in mind and mind is externalised in matter. They are the correlated phases of the one all-inclusive spirit. In preaching this truth idealism is in no way inconsistent with realism".

### XI

Prof. M. Hiriyanna discusses the epistemological problem of truth. First, he examines some of the theories of error. The Prabhakara regards error as non-apprehension of non-relation between the subject and predicate terms of an erroneous judgment. All knowledge is true; and error is only incomplete knowledge. As the Professor points out, this view is far from convincing. A purely negative explanation cannot account for error which is misapprehension and not mere lack of apprehension. When we mistake a block of crystal for ice, it may be argued that the ice, "though not present in the given situation, is still to be reckoned as a physical existent because it is found elsewhere and should have been actually experienced at some other time." This is how the Naiyayika would explain error. But how could the ice experienced elsewhere and at some other time be perceived as here and now? "The fact is that those who give such explanations confound likeness with identity. They forget that, while the

erroneous object may be similar to what has once been experienced, it need not be the same". Setting aside the views which consider the content of error to be either a memory image or an ideal construction, Prof. Hiriyantha shows the excellence of Anirvachaniyakhyati. The erroneous content is a presentation which is quite unique. Its nature cannot be fully expressed in terms known to logic or to psychology.

"True knowledge, by contrast, is that whose content is free from such unique presentations". Not correspondence but coherence is the test of truth. Knowledge is a system and truth is coherence therewith. It may appear that the acceptance of coherence involves relativity of truth. But the very notion of *relative* truth suggests the recognition of an absolute standard by which all knowledge is judged. The absolute truth which is self-complete is the goal of epistemology. "All the elements of the universe—whether they be knowable objects or knowing subjects—appear in it as internally related; and each of them reveals itself there as occupying the place that rightly belongs to it with the whole."

## XII

Sir S. Radhakrishnan begins by combating false ideas of religion. Religion should never make us neglect the duty of service to man. It may start with the individual, but it must end in a fellowship. Secondly, we should not confuse religion with spiritualistic and necromantic practices. "Religion is a search for truth and peace, not power and plenty." Thirdly, religion should not make of us passive sufferers of existing inequities in the social order. "Rightly in-

terpreted, religion means courage and adventure, not resignation and fatalism." Uncritical acceptance of meaningless forms and creeds is inconsistent with the true religious spirit. "The need of the world to-day," says Sir Radhakrishnan, "is for a religion of the spirit, which will give a purpose to life, which will not demand any evasion or ambiguity, which will reconcile the ideal and the real, the poetry and the prose of life, which will speak to the profound realities of our nature and satisfy the whole of our being, our critical intelligence and our active desire."

The values of the human soul give an intimation of the fact that at the centre of the soul there is a something, a spark "so akin to God that it is one with God, and not merely united to him" (Eckhart). The real is apprehended through intuition which is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect being. Man's being is grounded on the rock of ultimate reality, and he can intuit the fully real because he is himself the fully real. "True religion is born of spirit, not of flesh and blood, not of codes and customs, not of races and nations. The life of spirit consists precisely in being free from these things and penetrating into true being."

## XIII

Prof. R. D. Ranade describes the evolution of his own thought from a positive dislike of philosophy to a passionate love of mysticism. He wonders "how the pendulum has swung exactly to the other extreme". At first, he hated philosophy, as Saul did Jesus before the enlightenment came. But unconsciously there was a strong philosophical impulse within

him which led him to start with a pluralistic conception of spiritual reality. One of the first things he thought desirable was a comparative study of Indian and European philosophy. He was attracted by the Relativism of Herakleitos and concurred with him in the view that Relativism had no application to divine life. He regarded "truth" to be one, and its existence to be only in God, while all other things were full of error. But he felt that even a static philosophy should find a place for motion and change. From his study of Western and Eastern thought he came to realise that self-consciousness was not only possible, but alone real, that intuition was the only faculty by which self-realisation could be attained and that mystical experience had no meaning apart from moral development. These were the conclusions he had arrived at by the year 1928. Since then, he says, there has opened a new intellectual vista before him; and he hopes to place his views before the philosophical world in course of time.

#### XIV

Mr. V. Subrahmanya Iyer expounds an Indian view of Man's Interest in Philosophy. One of the lessons he learnt from his master, the late Sri Sacchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swami of Sringeri, is that "Philosophy is knowledge that rises above creed and scripture, vision and ecstasy, art and science, its sole object being a complete realisation of all that life implies". A distinction is to be drawn between *tattvam* and *matam*. Religions or *matams* may be many; but philosophy or *tattvam* is only one. Hence Fichte's view that "the kind of phi-

losophy that a man chooses depends upon the kind of man that he is" is not the Hindu idea of philosophy. Neither the intellect nor intuition is the means to philosophic knowledge. Philosophy, in India, "is based finally upon *Reason*—not authority, tradition, revelation, intellect or intuition and the like, though all these with their data are needed for enabling one to rise from intellect or intuition to 'Reason'. The sole function of reason is to detect and eliminate the cause of error whether of intellect or of intuition". Reason reveals to us the non-dual Spirit which is not only the ultimate truth but also the ultimate reality.

#### XV

Prof. A. R. Wadia finds in the Karma theory of the Hindus a satisfactory solution to the problem of evil; and true to the Religion of his Fathers, he believes that there can be nothing higher in life than morality. "Ethics raises certain ultimate questions which can be either dogmatically answered by religion or rationally by metaphysics." Dissatisfied with the religious foundations of morality, the Professor turned to metaphysics. By temperament he has always been an idealist and he believes that the Absolute as the unconditioned or the self-conditioned is the logical presupposition of all our experience. But his Absolute does not exclude growth and evolution. This he regards as the purport of Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit. "The growth of the parts cannot but affect the whole—the Absolute—if there is a real organic relationship between the whole and its parts." But we are inclined to ask: can the Absolute be a Whole-of-parts?

The very concept of identity-in-difference is unintelligible.

Prof. Wadia speaks of the particular brand of Idealism he accepts as Pragmatic Idealism because "Idealism by its very emphasis on the fundamental unity of nature in general and mankind in particular links itself with moralism."

## XVI

The great thinkers of India have given us in this volume sublime thoughts expressed in clear and unambiguous words. Two main trends can be discerned in these essays: Idealistic Absolutism and Pluralistic Monadism. Some of the writers think that the Absolute is the substrate of all things and thoughts; while the others hold that the universe consists of many reals, animate and inanimate, with God as their final end. But whatever view each Indian philosopher might champion, we have no doubt that all of them have shown in an unmistakable manner that contemporary Indian philosophy is a

dynamic force working for a better ordering of human society.

Prof. Muirhead thinks that the publication of the volume at this moment is significant. When the idea of this book as a continuation of the series on Contemporary British and Contemporary American Philosophy was suggested to him by an Indian friend, he welcomed it. "Coming as it did at a moment when, on the eve of the gigantic political experiment legislated for in the Indian Act, the need of a fuller understanding of the mind of the leaders of thought in that country, some of whom are certain to be called to take a prominent part in the new administration, is above all things desirable, the proposal seemed to be one of more than theoretic interest." Now that the Act has come into force, will these leaders of thought be given the necessary assurance and opportunity to serve their country by breaking the shackles that weigh heavily on her?

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Sri Swami Narayana :** *By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh. Published by the Sri Bhagwat Dharma Mission House, Rajkot. Pages xvii + 350. Price Rs. 4.*

This book is an account of the life and works of Sri Swami Narayana, better known as Sri Swami Sahajananda, the famous Sri Vaishnavite reformer of Gujarat. He civilised the unruly tribes of Gujarat, spread Sanskrit culture wherever he went (though himself an illiterate), established Satsangs in various parts of India open even for Muslims (not to speak of untouchables) and helped immensely in the abolition of crime and animal sacrifice. He built beautiful temples, formed fellowships for study and worship and organised

poor feeding on a large scale in many places. We wish that the present day social reformers take to heart the excellent lead given by this *most practical of reformers*, and thus help the regeneration of the Indian masses.

**The Human Soul in the Myths of Plato :** *By the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom Aahlu, 8, Hermon Hill, London. Pages 68. Price 3sh. net.*

The Myths of Plato, with their peculiar Oriental setting, are unintelligible to most European readers. Even scholars like Burnet and Zeller do not give accurate rendering of Plato. This unique publication thus serves a very useful purpose. In five succinct chapters the nature, choice and



descent, judgment, restoration and ascent of the Soul are well explained. The Soul being a principle so highly abstract and paradoxical that finite and concrete language cannot express fully its true nature, Plato, as every other great mythicist, makes use of symbols and images in order to lead the consciousness upwards to the reality behind them and beyond. And this is strikingly similar to the method of the Upanishadic seers. The similarities are so many that even the unwary Grecko-Sanskrit scholar is compelled to notice with admiration the unity of thought underlying both. When symbology in the various mythologies come to be rightly interpreted, Plato's myths will be found to be perfectly consistent not only with Upanishadic but also with Chaldean, Orphic and Egyptian mythologies.

**Christ and Communism :** *By Stanley Jones. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London. Price Rs. 5 sh. net.*

Stanley Jones, the ambitious Christian writer, is not unknown to the Indian public. In this book the author tries to match the kingdom interpretation as against the economic interpretation of history. And he seems to succeed by a confused usage of the terms 'Christ,' 'Church' and 'Paganism.' Communism is to be rejected as it has put vengeance into its programme, which Christ did not. Hence Christ is the only Saviour at the present crisis. The device of Mr. Jones is simple. He makes a Christian world by damning the pagan gods, religions and peoples wholesale (pages 219, 262, 284, 297, 148, 137), and that is because, "the conscience of Christendom is more and more revolting at the un-Christian mess into which pagan economics and pagan politics have landed us" (p. 306). Consequently pagans should become Christians as we cannot make a Christian world if the State remains poor which the pagans could never do. He solves the problem of differences by doing away with those who differ from him ! Such are the schemes of the future Christian statesman as found in this book. Though we appreciate the evangelical spirit of the author, we depreciate his sciolistic remarks on other religions and peoples. We hope that such sentimental remarks do not mar his future works if any.

**The New Evolution :** *By Narayana Kausika. Published by N. G. V. Aiyer Nemmara (Cochin, S. India). Pages xiv+171. Rs. 1-8.*

This is the first of a well-planned series which examines the general solution of all modern problems of life based on Truth which embraces the best of modern scientific knowledge and ancient philosophy and religion. It attempts to organise the future society on the basis of Pure Knowledge, Love, Virtue and Power, which alone can infuse new life into all departments of activity, as they alone touch life at every point.

**The World's Unborn Soul :** *By S. Radhakrishnan. Oxford University Press, Post Box No. 31, Bombay. Price 2 sh. Pp. 31.*

The contents of this book constitute the inaugural lecture delivered by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics, before the University of Oxford on 20th October 1936. With deep erudition and with characteristic brevity, Sir Radhakrishnan traces the evolution of man's spiritual aspiration in the West, from the times of the Greeks onwards, through its efflorescence into the Christiana piety of Medieval ages, and the tradition breaking intellectualism and scientific spirit of Renaissance, down to its modern phases consisting of a curious medley of humanism, psychoanalysis, religious revivals, nationalism and worship of the State. He describes the mental situation of the West to-day as one of uncertainty, of fundamental agnosticism and of uneasiness, and pleads that for a new wide-spread access of spiritual vitality, the West must recognise the contributions which Eastern cultures have to make. He next proceeds to give a brief exposition of the spiritual ideals of India, and in doing so sheds much light on topics like spiritual experience, the place of reason in religion, the true ideal of humanism, the doctrine of the true self, the theory of Maya and a host of other problems that interest the religious and the philosophical minds. The literary quality of the book, the professor's freshness and modernity of outlook, and the wealth of information coupled with brevity of exposition that form a striking feature of the book, all go to enhance its usefulness to

earnest men and women both in the East and the West.

**Prakartābhavivaranam (Sanskrit) :** A Commentary on Sri Sankara's Bhashya of the Brahmasutras, Vol. I. Edited by Dr. T. R. Chintamani, M.A., Ph.D. Published by the University of Madras. Pp. 588. Price Rs. 8.

The book under review is a precious work saved from oblivion through the laudable efforts of the Sanskrit Department of the University of Madras. Although this commentary has seldom been known till very recently, the importance of it is indisputable ; for it is the first full commentary on Sankara's Sutrashāhya from the view point of Padmapada and Prakasatman, generally known as the Vivarana school of Advaitic thought. We have before us the first volume of the work running up to the second Pada of the second chapter. The learned editor hopes to complete the book in the second volume, which would also contain a critical Introduction and useful Indices. Little has yet been ascertained about this hidden philosopher whose direct, lucid and profound exposition of the monumental masterpiece of Sri Sankara has been rescued for the world in this volume. Probably he lived in the 11th Century, for he mentions the name of Udayana ; and Anandagiri has in turn mentioned his name in various places. It is a perfectly mature work, and great philosophical acumen and wide mastery of other systems are in evidence in it. In the verse immediately following the opening invocation the commentator states that although he had understood the Bhashya, he was sorry for his inability to write the commentary without bestowing a very long reflection over it, and that finally he was however able to chase away that grief by properly finishing the commentary as he wished. The stamp of clear thought and deep erudition, which the work shows, testifies to this inner glimpse of truth, to get which he had to delay the writing of the commentary. Though this commentary is not as prolific as the famous Bhamati, it has a weight and perspicacity of its own, and it certainly deserves the attention of all students of philosophy, especially of the Advaita system. In the matter of colla-

tion of materials, editing and printing, the book comes to a very high standard of excellence.

**Sita's Choice and Other Plays :** By A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer, M.A., I. C. S. Published by New India Trading Company, Madras. V-200 Pp. Re. 1-8.

The book contains two playlets and a dialogue. The author handles the problems of social reform with the same ease with which he handles some metaphysical matters. The playlets are really nice, and the dramatic element in them is less prominent than the fine diction for which Mr. Panchapakesa Iyer is well-known.

**Svayamprakasavijayam (Tamil) :** By Subrahmanya Bharati. To be had of Visakavijayam, 26, Subhathirai Street, Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 2-8. Pp. 560.

The book gives a vivid portrayal of Svayamprakasa Swami, enumerating the various circumstances of his life which have already caught the attention of the Tamil land. The narrative part is studded with miracles which would tax the credulity of the present-day reader too heavily. But the Swami's burning dispassion for worldly goods, utter resignation to the Divine, indomitable courage born of deep convictions, staggering austerities and sweet saintly temper into which they finally mellowed, cannot fail to impress any sympathetic reader.

**The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna (Hindi) :** Published by Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, Allahabad. Price 10 annas.

This book contains a short life sketch of the Master in 76 pages, a collection of 568 important sayings arranged under proper headings, and an appendix. This work is bound to prove a boon to the spiritual seekers in the Hindi-speaking areas.

**Sri Arobindo and his Yoga (Hindi) :** By Lakshman Narayana Garde, Sri Arobindo Grantha-mala, 4, Hare Street, Calcutta.

This neatly printed small volume gives a brief and good account of Sri Arobindo's life and message. In the course of the work many practical hints on spiritual life are given.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta, for the year 1936.

"This Home is a college students' hostel licensed by the Calcutta University and run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashram. It is intended specially for poor and meritorious students, who are helped through their college course with free boarding, lodging as well as fees, books and other necessaries as far as possible. It supplements the academic education of the University by a thorough and systematic home-training calculated to develop the character and efficiency of the inmates. It is open also to a few paying students, who intend to receive the Home-training." At the beginning of the year there were altogether 33 students, of whom 22 were free, 2 concession holders and 9 paying. During the year 9 students left the home and 14 were admitted. At the end of the year there were 38 students, of whom 25 were free, 6 concession holders and 7 paying. Regular religious classes and festivals were conducted throughout the year. Except cooking, all other household duties are attended to by the students themselves. Of the 18 students who sat for the various examinations, one passed with first class honours and 13 were placed in the first division. The total receipts for the year with previous year's balance came to Rs. 14,516-14-9 and total disbursements to Rs. 9,998-7-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 4,518-7-9 of which Rs. 3,186-6-3 are fixed in the permanent fund.

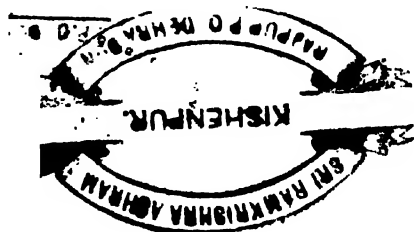
### Report for the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaikenpalayam (Coimbatore Dist.), for 1936.

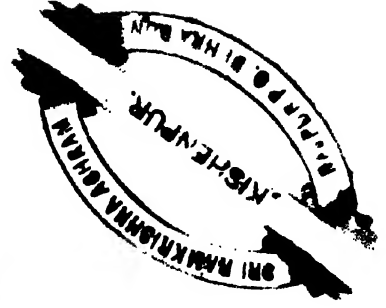
The Vidyalaya is situated in a plot of land, about 27 acres in extent, in an inspiring and beautiful and healthy locality. The total strength for the year is 81 in all the five classes together. All non-language subjects are taught in Tamil, and there are special arrangements for training in

carpentry, tailoring, agriculture and horticulture. Agriculture has also been introduced on a small scale. There is no part of the internal life of the Vidyalaya which is not managed in whole or in part by the boys themselves. Children's store and bank, health and hygiene, rural service scheme for rural workers and summer schools are some of the items in the report that catch the eyes of the reader. The important need of the Vidyalaya at present is a new building. The Budget for 1936-1937 demands Rs. 23,800 towards which contributions from the public are earnestly solicited by the management.

### Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, for 1936.

The report of this institution for the 15th year of its existence shows that there are in all 132 boys on the roll at the end of the year under review as against 124 in 1935. Of these one is a free student, 31 are concession holders and the rest paying. Altogether there are twelve graduates and fourteen undergraduates on the staff, most of whom are Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Order. Special care is taken with regard to the physical education of the boys. Besides the usual teaching work of the school, classes in typewriting and gardening as well as in music and fine arts continued to be held as in the previous year. To improve the housing arrangement and the equipment of the Vidyapith, the authorities appeal for a fund of about Rs. 50,000 for the construction of a prayer hall, a gymnasium, a library and reading room and for the salary of the paid teachers and for the vocational classes. All contributions for these purposes should be sent to the Secretary. One of the distinguished visitors has rightly remarked: "This attempt to combine the best in Indian tradition and culture with Western discipline and science must appeal to all."





Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

सर्वेश्वरः सर्वभूतानां स च सर्वप्रवर्तकः । सर्वात्मकः सर्वशक्तिः सर्वकारणकारणम् ॥  
सर्वसाधारणः सर्वरूपास्यश्च महात्मभिः । वासुदेवेति विख्यातस्तं विदित्वाश्नुतेऽमृतम् ॥  
तद् ब्रह्म परमं प्रोक्तं तद् धाम परमं पदं । तद् गत्वा कालविषयाद्विमुक्ता मोक्षमाप्तिताः ॥  
विषयेषु च संसर्गात् शाश्वतस्य च संशयात् । मनसा चान्यदाकांक्षन् परं न प्रतिपद्यते ॥  
मूढमेण मनसा विद्मो वाचा वक्तुं न शक्नुमः । मनोक्ति मनसा प्राह्यं दर्शनेन च दर्शनम् ॥  
ज्ञानेन निर्मलीकृत्य बुद्धिं बुद्ध्या मनस्तथा । मनसा चेन्द्रियग्राममक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते ॥

He is the Lord of all, and all objects are His manifestations. He is the one agent in the universe working through every thing. He is the soul of all as well as the power residing in them. He is the first cause that explains every finite cause. To all He is common, and to Him alone is due the worship of every noble heart. Realising Him—who is declared as Vasudeva or the Omnipresent Divinity—one becomes immortal and divine. It is the absolute, the most high, the supreme abode and the final goal. Those who reach it are outside the charmed circle of causality and are eternally free. But the Supreme is not attained because of our indulgence in sense enjoyment, because of our rankling doubt regarding the real, and because of our mind being preoccupied with other objects. With an absolutely refined mind we can know Him, but we cannot reduce that realisation into language; for the Mind has to be cognized with the mind, and Seer by the sight (i.e., self-cognition being unique, the experience it yields cannot be described like ordinary objective cognitions). He, the Imperishable One, is reached by purifying the intellect with knowledge, the mind with that purified intellect, and the senses with that purified mind.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 204.

## THE TRUE REVELATION

[In the following paragraphs is shown how the true revelation of God is found only in the person of a real saint.]

### I

**N**EVER since the dawn of thought, the human mind has been making earnest attempts to solve the mystery of life and understand the nature of the power that is at the back of this world of change and mortality. Something in the constitution of the mind of man makes it impossible for him to rest in any half-way house along the road of enquiry. The speculative spirit, even when suppressed persistently, leaps up again and again and rises heavenward as a single flame of aspiration until the problem of life has been thought out to its utmost limits. Scepticism invites man to join the ranks of intellectual and moral lotus-eaters, but in spite of all its seducing charms, robust thought all the world over has preferred the crudities of certainty to the sceptic's engaging fineries of balanced judgment and pretended disinterestedness.

But the reason of man, unaided by any inspiration from the source of life, finds itself baffled in the attempt to answer the ultimate questions—the whence, the why and the whither of life. Environed by the play of brute matter and its mechanical workings, and nurtured in the pitiless struggle, cruelty and selfishness characteristic of life, thought at first finds no sanction to infer the existence of any beneficent power at the back of life. Even if a first cause is necessary to explain the world, neither the mechanical scheme of the physical world

that science reveals, nor the scenes of heartless strife and struggle that daily experience lays bare, would allow us to associate goodness with that principle. Yet the appeal of the great values of life—of Truth, Goodness and Beauty—would leave one wondering why man should feel their urge from within and impact from without, if his environment were not surcharged with influences coming from an Intelligent Power that conserves in itself all these highest values we know of in life. But human thought cannot arrive at a settled conviction about this most absorbing question of life unless it gains light and guidance of a more decisive nature.

### II

It is when confronted with this difficulty that the religious mind turns for aid to the Scriptures, the Revelations of God enlightening man on the moot questions of divine nature, and the relation of God to man and the world. In these records of wisdom he finds a sanction to conceive the power at the back of the universe in terms of the highest that he knows of in life. However valuable these inspired books might be as prop to his faltering faith, the childish mind of man, incapable of understanding ideas in abstract forms, requires more concrete embodiment of spiritual principles than it comes across even in books carrying the highest authority. This higher revelation of divine nature we get in the lives of holy men.

For, if anything can convince us that Reality is in essence akin to the highest that is in man, that it is not something less but more than personality and the ordinary human experience of Truth, Beauty and Goodness,—it is the life and character of a truly holy man. For in the carnival of life, the unruffled calm and poise of his personality arrests our attention. In a world where man walks to his desired goal on the bodies of his falling comrades, where cunning might receives cringing reverence and simple goodness is rewarded with ridicule and deception, he sets up a standard of justice, dignity, independence and fellow-feeling that puzzles the understanding of ordinary man. His presence ever breathes the transforming influence of holiness, purity and self-abnegating love—not the corrupting stench of lust and greed that emanates from beastly humanity. He has no self-interest apart from the interest of others, no ambition except the glorification of God and the service of man, no wealth other than the treasures that his head and heart are endowed with. In the Divine he recognises his parent, in His devotees his friends, and in the whole universe his motherland. Wonderful, almost stupifying our imagination, is the might displayed in the universe and the unwearied workings of limitless energy constituting it. No less striking is the intelligence and skill revealed in the structure of a tiny living cell, not to speak of highly complex organisms. But infinitely more impressive is the self-abnegating love of the saintly heart which returns good for evil, gives without the thought of a return, and suffers so that his brother may be saved ; for power and skill, however awe inspiring and

wondrous they may be, fail to kindle the latent spirit in man as the sublimity of pure goodness does. Kant, the great German philosopher, declared that there are two things most impressive in the experience of man—the starry heavens above, and the moral sense within. If Kant had come across a true example of saintliness, he would not have coupled the feeling of pure good will with the mystery of the heavens. For the wonder and mystery deepens when we contemplate how, nurtured in Nature's amphetheatre and emerging from the lusts and brutality of an animal ancestry, man has at all come to develop such a faculty as the good will. Still more so is the feeling that overtakes us when we come across an example of pure saintliness, where the good will is not simply an inner feeling but a force operative in every thought and word as purifying and redeeming current of holiness and self-abnegating love. Even a sceptical heart, when confronted with a personality of this type, would feel it necessary to change his pre-conceived theories regarding the nature of the Power that is at the back of the universe.

### III

The sceptical mind generally goes in for a mechanical explanation of every phenomenon. It feels that a satisfactory account of a thing is given when it has been refunded to its antecedent condition. The house is only the wood, bricks and concrete of which it is made. Water is only oxygen and hydrogen in a certain proportion. The beautiful rainbow is nothing but an electrical phenomenon. Consciousness and all the mysterious powers of the human mind are redu-

cible to the workings of the brain cells. The whole world, with multifarious forms of life and wondrous display of intelligence, power, beauty and goodness, has come out of matter in its simplest form—atoms, electrons energy or whatever else science may describe it to be. This has been the method of sceptics and materialists of all ages and climes. But does an insight into the mechanism of things really dispell the mystery embodied in them? Does the mind feel convinced that when the constituents of an object have been discovered, the configuration and the values responsible for its peculiar individuality have also been duly explained? A little thought will show that the method of mere simplification absolutely fails to unravel the complexity of things. The house is the impress of human purpose on the bricks and other materials, and without taking it into consideration, the materials in themselves do not explain it. In the water particle are peculiar properties like moisture, even traces of which cannot be found in the hydrogen and oxygen constituting it. The electrical forces that cause the rainbow are quite innocent of its beauty which makes one's heart leap within oneself with joy. That consciousness and all its attendant developments consist only of the dance of electrons seems more a paradox than an explanation of those wonderful phenomena. For it is impossible for the human mind to conceive how anything can be called the sole cause of another when there is so great a disparity and contradiction between the two in their respective natures and attributes. In fact, while cold logic and the naturalistic bent of mind impel one to seek intellectual

satisfaction in mere mechanical explanation of experience, the personality of man in its totality feels dissatisfied with such a reductive process which ignores the phases of things that really affect our lives. No invocation of mechanical categories, or of a scientific Demiurge can therefore finally dissolve the mystery that surrounds experience in all its phases. Every step in the reductive process only helps to demonstrate the inadequacy of the scientific technique of measurement, and to reveal the presence of an unplumbed depth at the heart of the universe, and of an elusive and tantalising charm in the face of things.

#### IV

It is this inexplicable and unanalysable residue of mystery, so clearly visible even in the trivial things of the world, that assumes stupendous proportions in the personality of the saint. So unlike is he from all his surroundings, so unworldly are his reactions to the various stimuli coming from men and things, that one is left wondering as to whence such heavenly graces of character are perfected in an individual who shares the same social and physical environment with his fellow beings. In the vast expanse of matter there seems to be only a solitary wave whose crest is crowded with specks of phosphorescence that we call life, intelligence and personality. The background from which they have sprung, and in which they thrive, is for all appearance their antipode—a region of dead, unconscious and irresponsive stuff, entirely swayed by the laws of mechanism. The biological and social environment of life, both in its lower and higher forms, is in no wise more sublime

than the relentless play of mechanical forces. If it is not blind and unconscious like matter in its operation, it is more heinous and gruesome in its workings ; for its fundamental law of struggle for existence implies a conscious suppression of one's fellows, and an infliction on others of sufferings which one would gladly shun in one's own case. Yet, how has the self-regulating principle of life sprung out of a purely mechanical organisation ? How has the light of consciousness emerged from the bosom of unconscious matter ? How has man, nurtured in the struggle characteristic of life, begun to feel the faint whisperings of conscience whose dictates go directly against the law of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, the very constituent principles of his biological and social environment ? And, more than all, how in the personality of the saint the voice of conscience has become truly operative even against the odds of worldly temptations, replacing the laws of struggle and survival with those of surrender, love and suffering ? how in the saint, man, the beast has got transformed into man, the God ? how the sanctifying flame of holiness has come to burn bright and steady in the region of the human heart where the violent gust of passions, the hot winds of lust and greed, have been raging for what length of time no one knows ?

## V

Here are facts sufficiently puzzling to a reflective mind, and complex enough to make one dissatisfied with the reductive processes and simplified explanations of materialism. In fact through every bit of experience the Divine vouchsafes His presence unto

us. For finitude is but the lisping of Infinity. As soon as we ask the 'why' of even the most trivial of the things that we perceive with any of our senses, our enquiry stops, and we are stranded in a sense of mystery. We seem to hear the spirit in all laughing at the audacious attempt of our little understanding to measure the infinite involved in finite existences. But familiarity is the best corrosive on the sense of wonder even where wonder is desirable, *viz.*, the unfathomable greatness and mystery at the heart of things. The face of God, visible even in the trivial things, therefore fades before our vision insensitised by familiarity. Even the starry heavens, which roused the sense of wonder in Kant, leave the prosaic man of the world ordinarily cold and irresponsive. But there are, nevertheless, lucid moments in the lives of all, following some revolution within or a crushing blow from without, when the opaque coverings of our vision are torn asunder, and we get a passing glimpse of the transcendental revelations that the grandeur of natural phenomena or the beauty and rhythm of forms and sounds have to communicate to us. But more than through the beauty and majesty of Nature, more even than through the faint whisperings of conscience within us, it is in the life and character of the perfected saint that man gets the most luminous revelation of God which one who has not oneself risen to the status of sainthood can possibly have. For in the effort to produce the saintly character, Reality lays bare its innermost essence, otherwise hidden from our view by its biological and material vestures. It reveals itself progressively in the successive strands



of experience open to us—as unconscious power in matter, as self-regulating vitality in life, as the blind wisdom of instinct in consciousness, as the sense of freedom and conscience in self-consciousness, and as pure holiness and divinity in super-consciousness characteristic of the saint. Not in the roots of the evolutionary process, but in the fruits at its progressive stages of maturity does the Power at the back of the universe reveal its nature.

## VI

Man is like a savage travelling in a railway train for the first time, and that at night. The experience of such a giant vehicle running so fast without any animal even to pull it is quite novel to the savage, and entices him into speculations about the origin of the motion. If he is quite foolish, he may be satisfied by thinking that it moves of itself. If he is a little wiser, he may attribute the motion to some spirit, caring little to make himself clear about the nature of that spirit. But as he looks out of the railway compartment into the enveloping vistas of darkness all around, he sees from one end of the train sparks of fire coming out. He notices this phenomena accompanying the motion of the train all along. If he is intelligent enough, he will at once discover in fire a clue to the nature of the power moving the train, even though the exact origin of those sparks may be beyond his capacity to trace, and even though his immediate surroundings in the railway carriage may go only to complicate the riddle suggested by them.

Such is the solution that suggests itself to the man of faith regarding the riddle of the universe. Not in

terms of the rudimentary state arrived at by the reductive process but in the highest known to human experience does he interpret the nature of Reality. Our knowledge of the universe, limited and partial as it is, may in many respects seem to go against this interpretation, but the voice of faith drowns these whisperings of doubt by the clinching questions: "How then have the higher forms of organisation come out of the simpler? How do the primary values of our experience come to be? How again does life, consciousness and self-consciousness emerge? And, how, above all, has true saintliness, the smokeless flame of holiness and love, manifested itself in this world, sanctifying everything by its touch and compelling the reverence of even the most prosaic of men? If the universe were only what it appears to our superficial view—a lifeless, unconscious mechanical force at the physical level, and a ghastly unrighteous gladiatorial show at the biological level—how have these expressions of intelligence and urges of nobler passions been possible in it? how, as the crowning achievement of its evolutionary process, has it produced the saintly type in whose life the laws of struggle and survival are all reversed and replaced by those of purity, love and self-sacrifice?" No, exclaims the still small voice of faith in man, the universe which unfolds all these potentialities cannot in its essence be something 'less' than these. To conceive of it, therefore, in terms of goodness, of beauty and above all of holiness would be far more correct than to interpret it in terms of the concepts provided by the reductive process. If unconscious mechanism and brutal struggle are looming large in

our superficial view, it is not because the universe has no higher strand in it, but because our vision is limited and does not see sufficiently deep into its nature and its purpose. So the man of faith sings with the poet :

For tho' the giant Ages heave the  
hill

And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their  
will ;

Tho' world on world in myriad  
myriad roll

Round us, each with different  
powers,

And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the  
soul ?

## VII

And this spirit, which forms the innermost essence of ourselves and of the universe, no doubt reveals its nature in the great scriptures of the world, but no where does it manifest itself so gloriously as in the character and personality of the illumined sage whose type is described in all vividness in the following verses gleaned from the chapters of the Bhagavad Gita :

"When a man puts away all the desires of his mind, and when his spirit finds comfort in itself—then is he called a man of steadfast wisdom. He who is not perturbed in mind by adversity and who has no eagerness amidst prosperity, he from whom desire, fear and anger have fallen away—he is called a sage of firm understanding. He who has no attachments on any side, and who does not rejoice or hate when he obtains good or evil,—his wisdom is firmly set. The objects of sense fall away from the embodied soul when it

ceases to feed on them, but the taste for them is left behind. Even the taste falls away when the Supreme is seen. The man into whom all desires enter as the waters enter into the sea, which, though ever filled, remains within its bounds—such a man attains to peace, and not he who hugs his desires.

"Thinking of Him, at one with Him, abiding in Him, and delighting solely in Him, the sages reach a state from which there is no return, their sins being dispelled by their knowledge. Sages look upon all alike—whether it be a learned and lowly Brahman or a cow or an elephant or even a dog or an outcaste. Those whose minds are thus set on equality have even here overcome their being. God is pure, and is the same in all, therefore are they established in God. He who knows God, and is established in Him, he who is undeluded and is firm of mind—he neither joys at what is pleasant nor is vexed at what is unpleasant. His soul being unattached to external objects, he finds the happiness that is in himself ; he is in union with God, and he enjoys undying bliss. The Yogin who is happy within, who rejoices within, and who is illumined within becomes divine, and attains to the beatitude of God. Those whose sins are destroyed and whose doubts are removed, whose minds are disciplined and who rejoice in the good of all beings—such holy men attain to the beatitude of God. Those who are free from desire and anger, and who have subdued their minds and realised themselves—around such austere men lies the beatitude of God.

"He who never hates any being and is kindly and compassionate, who is free from the feeling of 'I' and


'Mine', and who looks upon pleasure and pain alike, and has forbearance; he who is ever content and is steady in contemplation, who is self-restrained and is of firm conviction, and who has consecrated his mind and understanding to Me—dear to Me is the man thus devoted. He by whom the world is not harassed and who is not harassed by the world, he who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me. He who has no wants, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned and untroubled, and who is selfless in all his

enterprises—dear to Me is the man who is thus devoted to Me. He who neither joys nor hates, neither grieves nor wants, and who has renounced both good and evil—dear to me is the man who is thus devoted. He who is alike to foe and friend and through good and ill repute, who is alike in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachments; he who is alike in praise and dispraise, who is silent and satisfied with whatever he has, who has no home and is firm of mind—dear to Me is the man thus devoted."

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

 NE day asked the Mother, "Mother, how shall I lead my life?"

Mother : Do just as you are doing now. Pray to God sincerely. Always keep Him in your mind.

Disciple : Mother, I become frightened to see even great souls falling from the ideal.

Mother : If you constantly live in the atmosphere of enjoyments, the objects of enjoyment will naturally come to you. My child, don't look at objects of temptation—not even at their representations in wood. Don't go near them.

Disciple: Man cannot do anything. He, our inner guide, gives us the inspiration of work.

Mother : Yes, it is true that we are like puppets and He has the string

in His hand. But are we conscious of it? Infatuated by our vanity, we think that we are doing everything. We do not at all depend upon God. He who depends upon God is saved from all troubles by His grace.

Referring to a Swami, the Mother said. "Sri Ramakrishna used to warn the spiritual people by saying, 'O holy man, be always alert and careful. A holy man must be always vigilant. He must always be careful. He walks on a slippery road, and one who does so must always walk on his toes. Is it an easy thing to be a monk? He must never look at objects of temptation. While walking, he must fix his eyes on his big toe.' The ochre robe of a monk protects him always, like the collar of a dog."

Nobody can injure him. The San-nyasin has before him the public road. Everyone makes way for him.

"It is the natural tendency of mind to run after evil things. It refuses to think of noble ideas. Many years ago, I used to meditate regularly at three o'clock in the morning. One day I did not feel well, and through sheer laziness did not practise meditation. For this reason I neglected meditation for some days. Therefore one must have tremendous sincerity and make unrelenting efforts to do good things. While I was staying in the Nahabat at Dakshineswar, I would at night look at the reflection of the moon in the calm water of the Ganges, and would weep and pray to God, 'O God, there are dark spots even in the moon. May there be no stain in my mind.' While I was staying in the Nahabat, Sri Ramakrishna forbade even Ramlal\* to come to me. He was such a near relative of mine; but now I appear before everybody and speak to all.

You are a young man of Calcutta. You could easily have married and enjoyed the world if you had so desired, but once you have renounced those things why should you turn your mind again towards them? Why do you eat the sputum after throwing it on the ground!"

Disciple: Is it, Mother, desirable to practise posture and breathing exercises?

Mother: One gets psychic powers from them, and these powers deviate one from the path of truth.

Disciple: Is it desirable for a monk to visit holy places?

Mother: If the mind be peaceful at one place, then what is the necessity of pilgrimage?

Disciple: I cannot meditate, Mother. Please awaken my Kundalini.

Mother: Oh yes, the Kundalini will no doubt be awakened. Practise a little meditation and Japa, and you will feel it. Can one ever awaken the Kundalini without any effort? Practise meditation and Japa, and you will feel the result. While practising meditation, your mind will be so concentrated on the ideal that you will never care to give up the meditation. But if any day the mind refuses to meditate, you need not force it to do so. Simply salute the Lord and then do your other duties. But you will find that on some days meditation becomes spontaneous.

\* \* \*

Disciple: Mother, why can't I control my mind? When I try to think of God, the mind is distracted by so many objects.

Mother: If by objects you mean money, wife or children, then no doubt it is bad. But it is quite natural for the mind to remember our various works and duties. If you cannot meditate, practise Japa. One gets realisation by simply repeating the name of God, as the old saying goes. Yes, by mere repetition of His name, one realises God. If you can meditate, well and good; otherwise do not force your mind to do so.

\* \* \*

Disciple: Is it good to practise spiritual disciplines in our monastery at Benares, or should one retire into complete solitude for that purpose?

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\*Ramlal was a nephew of Sri Ramakrishna.

**Mother :** At first one should mature the mind by spiritual practices in a solitary place like Hrishikosh. Then when the mind has become pure and strong, wherever one lives or whatever company one keeps, it never becomes agitated. A tender young plant should be protected by putting a hedge around it. But when it grows into a tree, neither the cow nor the goat can do it any harm. It is absolutely necessary to practise spiritual disciplines in solitude. Whenever any idea crops up into your mind, whenever you want to know anything, go to a lonely place, weep before the Lord, and pray to Him. He, the all-compassionate God, will remove the impurities of your mind, destroy all your difficulties and explain everything to you.

**Disciple :** I have no power to practise disciplines. I have taken shelter at your feet. May your will be fulfilled.

At this the Mother with folded hands began to pray to Sri Ramakrishna, "O Lord, give him the power to preserve his monastic vows." Continuing the Mother said, "He is looking after you. Why should you fear anything? Always do Sri Ramakrishna's work and also practise meditation and prayer. It is desirable to be engaged in activities. That keeps away useless thoughts from our mind. If you are always alone without any work, then you

give idle thoughts the opportunity to disturb your mind.

**Disciple :** Where and how should one practise spiritual exercises?

**Mother :** Why, Benares is the best place for you. Spiritual exercises mean to constantly remember the lotus feet of God and devote the mind to thoughts of Him. Always repeat His name.

**Disciple :** What is the use of mere repetition of name unless one has devotion for God?

**Mother :** Whether you willingly jump into the water or you are pushed into it, it is all the same. Your cloth will be drenched in either case. Meditate regularly every day. Your mind is not yet matured. Through meditation it will gradually become quiet. Always discriminate. If the mind goes to any external object, think of it as impermanent, and then devote yourself to God. Once a man was angling. A procession with bridegroom and music passed by his side, but his mind was fixed only on the float.

**Disciple :** What is the goal of life?

**Mother :** To realise God and to be constantly absorbed in His meditation. You are a monk and belong to Him. Certainly He is looking after you, both here and hereafter. Why should you be worried then? Is it possible to think of God always? Sometimes go out for a little walk, and at other times think of Him.

## THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

By Dr. P. T. Raju, M.A., Ph.D., Sastri

[Dr. P. T. Raju is a Professor of Philosophy in an Indian University and the author of "Thought and Reality : Hegelianism and Advaita." In the following article he gives a masterly interpretation of the Doctrine of Maya from the psychological, ethical and logical points of view, in face of some well-known criticisms. His final conclusion in the last paragraph about the reason for misconceptions regarding the doctrine of Maya is specially noteworthy, and the opponents of the doctrine will lose much of their antagonism to it if they keep that in mind.]

### I

**T**HE conception of *Maya* in Advaita philosophy is so technical and full of nuances that the general mind is apt to misunderstand it easily. In ordinary parlance the word has so many associations with magic, legerdemain, deceit, and hallucinations, that the Advaita philosophy, in spite of its popularity, cannot be said to have been rightly understood. The conception of *Maya* has been strongly attacked continuously even from the time of Sankara. Yet the fact that the concept has entered into the very lives and thoughts of people shows that it has some truth which the Indian mind instinctively tries to appropriate, though even without the right understanding of it. Of late many Christian writers have criticised it ; but no ardent student of Advaita can fail to notice their misunderstanding. They have been criticising Sankara for holding a view which he did not hold. To a large extent their fault is due to their allowing themselves to be guided by certain current adverse notions of Advaita set afloat by the rival schools of Vedanta.

A very common misunderstanding of the doctrine of *Maya* is that it teaches that the world is a mere illusion, a shadow or a dream that has

no substantiality. Therefore, it is said, the Hindu is in general other-worldly, apologetic of his existence, pessimistic in his outlook, and without zest for life. It is also said that the Advaita system has no ethical significance, because morality has meaning only in this world, but Advaita declares this to be a passing shadow. But the criticism is based on the popular conception of the word *Maya*. Advaita does not teach the shadowy nature of this world, nor that we should be sorry for our birth here. It teaches renunciation not to the brute who has no experience of the values which this world has to offer, but to one who has already the experience of them. Renunciation is preached to the latter just to remind him that the values of the world are not the highest, that there is something higher. The higher can be realised only when the mind is detached from the lower. These values are not physical objects or curios which man can collect and keep for himself even while collecting the better and costlier one. They refer to the depths of experience, the greater depths unreachable if man wants to be in contact with the lesser ones. Yet man cannot reach the greater depths without passing through the lesser ones. This aspect of the Advaita philosophy of life is

not specifically treated, because such treatment was not required as it was already taught in the doctrine of *Adhikara* or desert, and that of the four *Asramas* or stages of life. Only those should renounce who are not attracted by the things of the world. But in whom can such an attitude to the world be produced? Not in the boy whom the bright and the brilliant colours of the world, its strong tastes, and loud noises attract, not in the youth who is moved by the sweet smells of flowers and the beautiful looks of women, not even in the householder with his cares and anxieties about the present and future of the family. That is why it is required of every man that he should pass through the four stages of life. He should at first lead the student's life by the end of which term his intellect will have been sufficiently developed to guide him in his later stages. Then he becomes a householder in which stage he experiences all that is to be experienced in this world, enjoys all the values which this world contains. Next he goes to the forest and becomes a forest-dweller. The solitude of the forest enables him to co-ordinate all his experiences, brood over them, assign each its value, and examine his own mind to find out whether there is anything still in this world towards which it is particularly bent, and without which he feels that his life is incomplete. Then, after much thinking and self-examination, when he succeeds in co-ordinating his intellect, emotion, volition, and instinct, he makes the great resolution to renounce and enter the stage of *Sannyasa*. This renunciation should not be felt as something great by him, for he is to renounce a world which has nothing in particular to offer

him. If a man really feels that he has done a great thing by renouncing, we should say, he is not fit for *Sannyasa*. We hear in the histories of great saints that rich and beautiful ladies who offered themselves to them were not rebuked as seducers, but were simply answered by the saints that they did not want them as the pleasures offered did not attract them.

When so much is expected of the man who is to follow the Advaitic ideal of life, it is unfair and unreasonable to say that it has no ethical significance. The forest-dweller's stage is intended for the complete co-ordination of volitions, emotions, instinct and intellect, and such co-ordination is possible only in a man who is highly virtuous. The realisation of Brahman is not possible for the immoral. One deserves initiation into the knowledge of Brahman only when one acquires *Sama* or tranquility, *Dama* or self-restraint, *Titiksha* or forbearance, and such other qualities. Of course, morality is subservient to the realisation of Brahman or the religious life. The moral law, for Advaita, cannot be its own justification. No Categorical Imperative, which is an absolute demand of morality, is recognised. Kant, who formulated this imperative, has often been criticised as giving mere form without content, for what precisely that Categorical Imperative demands could not be determined. Morality is inherently relative, and cannot be the basis of an absolutist philosophy. Of course no absolutist philosophy should run counter to the normal demands. And Advaita certainly does not preach against them; on the other hand, it requires the strictest observance of them.

## II

Thus the doctrine of *Maya* does not preach either immorality or even indifference to morality. On the contrary, because Advaita demands perfection of mind, *Maya* also, as an essential aspect of Advaita, demands it. It is of course not a concept directly based upon ethics. Yet it is a concept based upon the actual course of life. In life it signifies the alogical nature of its process or creativity. Apart from absolutistic considerations, the problem of the relation and interaction between the ideal and the actual in life requires that concept. Even in Aristotle we read that the ideal acts as an attractive force on the actual. The question here arises, how can the ideal, if it is merely a mental creation or projection, act on the actual? And if the ideal too is actual, where does the need for the actualisation of the ideal or the realisation of it arise? The only satisfactory answer seems to be that the ideal is actual at a different level of reality or depth of being, that both are continuous or related, and that, for the agent concerned, the ideal is not actual, because it is actual at a higher level. This relation is therefore alogical. For logical relations hold only between actualities of the same level. Besides, there is another important point to note. When the ideal is actualised, the actual of the agent must have been altered, and so must have ceased to exist. The realisation of the ideal is the realisation of a new form, and the new form cannot retain the old form as such, and so throws it out of existence. That is, at the level of the higher, the lower as such must cease to exist. It is

important to note that this existence refers to forms, and that, according to Sankara, it is forms that come and go out of existence. *Sankara's is distinctly an idealism without ideas*, and those who compare him to Plato should take note of this fundamental difference, for *Plato's is undoubtedly an idealism of the ideas*. Sankara recognises no eternal universals, and his Absolute is not a system or an identity in difference of these universals. Now, though we speak of the realisation of the ideal or the actualising of it, for the agent it is the realisation of what is already existing at a different level. From his point of view such realisation is in truth the transporting of himself from the lower to the higher level. The higher is not felt by him as his creation, but as an objective fact already existing and awaiting recognition. These levels of reality are not produced by the agent, and if we confine ourselves to moral experience, the transportation from one level to another is really a change in the outlook of the agent, a change of standpoint which gives an altered picture of the universe. After this change, the agent cannot but wonder why he had been regarding the universe differently. He feels like one who has newly learnt the appreciation of music, who begins to see some positive quality in what once used to be a mere combination of notes. The agent then cannot say that his old experience was unreal, for it was actually felt by him; yet he cannot say that it was real, for the real is the new experience. The only concept that is adequate to this fact is that of *Maya*. *Maya* is what cannot be dismissed as unreal or



merely imaginary, and yet is not the real.\*

In the light of the above considerations we can see that *Maya* is a concept that pertains to the metamorphoses or transformations in human life, where the higher and the lower, the ideal and the actual, meet and interact. It is a concept expressive of the feeling of the alogicality of the process felt by the agent himself who undergoes the process. If we take a spectator point of view, we can place these levels one above the other, and say that there is between them the logical relation of identity in difference. But such a point of view misses the true significance of the process. This is a process of life—of a conscious life that is aware of its continuity through the different levels—which experiences thrills and surprises at every change, and along with its own transformation finds the universe also continually being transformed. The concept of *Maya* is therefore connotative of an important aspect of our life. It has as such to be recognised by every system of ethics, though it itself is not based upon any such system for the obvious reason that morality is relative, and when made absolute becomes mental purification and perfection, which gradually shades of into, and becomes identical with, religion—which is the process of life striving after the highest ideal.

### III

So far as regards the ethical side of Advaita. Sankara has not left any definite system of ethics, but if we

take his system as a whole and analyse it, we cannot fail to notice the above import of his concept of *Maya*. There are cognate problems in both logic and metaphysics. Every philosophy that admits levels of existence, whatever their number, cannot but accept the doctrine of *Maya* in one form or another. The higher levels of reality cannot be treated as produced by the agent as he passes through them, but as already by implication present all along. Otherwise, how the higher level forms the ideal which can act on the lower cannot be explained. This admission necessitates the admission of the principle of *Maya* as above shown. Again, every absolutism has to give place to this principle at one place or another. The crux of absolutism is the problem of the relation between the finite and the infinite. It treats only the infinite as the ultimately real, and the finite as the phenomenal appearance, and exhorts the finite to realise the infinite. But how can the phenomenal world come out of the infinite? If the infinite is the only real, then what comes out of it must also be infinite. Spinoza tells us that the phenomenal world is seen only because of the finitude of our intellect. Otherwise, only the infinite will be seen. But on his theory, it is difficult to understand how the finitude of the intellect has come to exist. For if the mind's finitude is the cause of the existence of the phenomenal world, we require some other cause for the mind's finitude. But the mind is equally a part of the phenomenal world. Spinoza calls this phenomenal appearance an illusion, which implies that we cannot dismiss the phenomenal world as merely imaginary, and yet cannot treat it as real.

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\**Maya* is described also as that which cannot be treated as both real and unreal at once, because nothing can be both at once.

And everything that is neither real nor unreal, as Sankara calls it, is *Maya*.

If the finite is real and comes out of the infinite, then there should be something besides the infinite which makes it produce the finite. But if so, the infinite would no longer be infinite, for it is limited by that other entity. But if there is nothing else, it is difficult to understand not only how the infinite produces the finite, but also why the infinite creates at all. This problem can be solved only by treating the world as not having the same reality as that of the infinite, as not existing at the level of the infinite, but only at the lower level. Thus we have in our hands what *Maya* means.

#### IV

Even in the philosophy of Ramanuja, this concept has to be admitted, though he makes a very adverse criticism of it. He seems to think that, by treating the world of Nature and finite minds as the body of the Absolute, he escapes the difficulty of explaining how the finite comes out of the infinite. But the difficulty is thereby only pushed back, and not solved, for so long as he makes the distinction between the ideal and actual states of the body of his Absolute or Iswara, the ideal state being the state of perfection and the actual being phenomenal, the same problem appears in another form, namely, why and how does the phenomenal state come out of the ideal? To answer this question, Ramanuja postulated an indescribable and inexplicable power called Iswarasakti or Lakshmi who is made to perform the same function which *Maya* does in Advaita. The only difference be-

tween Ramanuja and Sankara seems to be that the principle is personified and made a fit object of worship and devotion by the one, while the other leaves it intellectual and impersonal. Ramanuja says that the world is real; he does not say that it is *Maya*, i.e., it is neither real nor unreal. But even then, if the world is to be related to the ideal and the relation logically understood, the help of a concept identical in essence with *Maya* has to be sought.

Even in Hegel, who is often compared to Ramanuja, we find the need felt for the concept of illusion. Hegel calls it *Tauschung*. The Absolute, Hegel tells us, is eternally perfect, and as such is the Good eternally realised. Yet the Absolute is the all-inclusive whole outside which nothing exists. Thus just as Ramanuja's Iswara includes the finite world as its own body, Hegel's Absolute is an identity of the manifold of the phenomenal world. Though the theory that the relation between the finite and the infinite is identity in difference is associated in Indian philosophy particularly with the names of Asmarathya, Bhaskara, and Vallabha, even in Ramanuja we find a view closely connected with it. Hegel then is faced with the question, how, if the Absolute is eternally perfect and good and includes every thing, are we account for the presence of evil and the continual strife for the realisation of the good? Hegel answers that the good is eternal and eternally accomplished, and the evil and the strife are due to our illusion. It is illusion that makes us see evil. This admission shows that no absolutist philosophy can dispense with concept of *Maya*. For, otherwise, if the evil is real,

and if the Absolute is to be constructed out of evil, which is the phenomenal world, by making it a harmony, the Absolute would be a far-off divine event and not an eternally accomplished fact.

Coming to a very recent absolutist, F. H. Bradley, we find our view still holding true. Bradley proves that nothing finite can be self-consistent and real, for the real is always an individual that can exist by itself, whereas the finite cannot be self-dependent. It therefore depends for its existence upon something else, namely, the Absolute, which is self-consistent and therefore real. But then the question is raised, why and how, if the Absolute is the only real, the finite appears at all. Bradley answers that *somehow*—and we cannot understand how—the appearances come out of the Absolute and are absorbed into it. But does this absorption constitute the Absolute? No, it cannot. The Absolute is eternal and is an eternal implication of our finite consciousness, be it, in logic or ethics. Then are we to say that the finite is unreal or that it is real? Neither. That is why Bradley takes shelter in his *somehow*, which shows the alogical nature of the process. If this “*somehow*” is treated as a principle, it would be the same as *Maya*.

### V

Further, it is this concept of *Maya* that gives positive significance to error and evil. Very often it has been mentioned that no monism or absolutism can recognise evil as a positive entity. Almost all systems of monism regard evil as really no evil, but as so only due to our finite point of view. Evil is thus explained

away. It is said that evil exists only because we do not possess the widest outlook, only because we do not view things *sub specie aeternitatis*. What is evil from a limited point of view is good from the unlimited. Hence it is said the universe is good. It is against such monisms and theodicies that Bradley's sarcastic definition of optimism, that the world is the best of all possible worlds where everything is evil, is directed. Is evil merely a privation or absence of the good? Is the evil changed into good by changing our stand-point? Can pain be changed into pleasure by looking at it from the level of the Absolute? The peculiar quality of the feeling of pain is different from that of pleasure, and pain is not merely the absence of pleasure. Pain is something positive, it is not pleasure viewed from a wrong point of view. Yet that pain is only pleasure viewed from a wrong stand-point is implied by almost all monisms. And the root of the difficulty lies in their attempt to regard the Absolute as a whole of these finites. Thus the good is harmony of these evils. These monisms have to treat it so, because they want to regard the finite as real; and because evil is found in the finite world, the good which is the Absolute has to be viewed as a system of evils. Evil, according to them, is evil only when taken in isolation, but when taken as an aspect of the whole, it is good. But from the other side, evil is only the good viewed from the finite level. Thus the actual difference between evil and the good ceases to exist.

But the principle of *Maya* can give place to the positive quality of evil. According to it, the Absolute is not made of the finites; the finites

are neither real nor unreal for the Absolute. Yet they are experienced somehow by the finite minds in a way that cannot be logically understood. So the experience of evil is a positive fact. Of course from the eternal point of view evil does not exist, not because the same evil appears as pleasure by being viewed in a different light, but because evil ceases to exist. Evil is a form of experience completely different from that of the good. One is as positive as the other, not the same viewed differently. Evil can be given a positive significance in Sankara's absolutism, because *Maya* implies the positive experience of a hard fact which is neither real nor unreal.

In logic too for the same reason error gets a distinctly positive significance in Advaita. The object of illusion is not an imaginary idea, and also not a thing seen somewhere else in the past. It is *Anirvachaniya* or inexplicable, which is the same as *Maya*. It is *Anirvachaniya* or *Maya* for the reason that it is neither real nor unreal nor imaginary. So long as an illusion lasts, it is seen as an objective fact, a fact which exists in front of us. But an object of imagination is always known as non-existent. Hence the object of illusion cannot be treated as unreal like the object of imagination. Yet it cannot be treated as real, for the real is what exists always, and is never cognised as non-existent, whereas the object of illusion is regarded as non-existent by the correct cognition. Hence Advaita regards the object of illusion as a distinct positive entity, and relegates it to a realm of existence lower than the empirical. Similarly the empirical world which cannot be real like the Absolute is given by the prin-

real. But the other forms of monism both in the East and the West, and many realistic systems of India regard the object of illusion, like evil, as a real object but viewed in a wrong place.\* Thus the object of illusion cannot have a distinctness of its own, it cannot be a unique object, but an object seen somewhere else, and remembered or wrongly seen as existing in front.

Thus consistent and co-ordinate treatment of error and evil must be based on the doctrine of *Maya*. In Western philosophy many monistic writers have emphasised the fact that evil, as a hard fact experienced in this world, should be given a positive nature different from that of the good. But the emphasis on the object of illusion as a positive entity different from the real is not to be met with in almost all the idealists of the West. It is no answer to say that many writers maintain that error somehow and somewhere belongs to reality. For then the object of illusion becomes some object which exists somewhere else but not in front of the agent. The agent sees the object in front of him. Thus in almost all monisms the tendency in ethics seems to be at variance with that in logic. But logic and ethics are normative sciences, and now when it has been rightly recognised that any philosophical system is the result of a particular method, the method followed in both ethics and logic should be the same if they are ciple of *Maya* a distinctly positive character by not regarding it as un-

\*Both the *Akhyati* and the *Anyathakhyati* theories are akin in this respect. Against the *Asatkhati* theory the objection is rightly urged, how a non-existent thing can be perceived in front.

to form parts of one system of philosophy. If evil is recognised as a positive entity, error also should be so recognised. Such recognition is possible in any idealism only on the basis of *Maya*. In Western philosophy some contemporary realists, especially of the American school, treat error as positive, and regard the object of illusion as subsistent, though not as existent ; but they are realists and pluralists, and a consideration of their doctrine leads to an examination of pluralism and realism, which cannot be attempted here. Yet we can say this much that the distinction between subsistence and existence does not hold, for so long as the illusion lasts, its object is seen to exist, and the difference between subsistence and existence cannot be made in it. Besides, bare pluralism is a theory long ago refuted, and it has value only as a critic of the extravagances of monism. In the history of philosophy greater constructive efforts lie towards the turning of pluralisms into monisms, and pluralisms generally begin as reactions against one-sided monisms.

Again, the desire to treat the world as positive lies at the root of the Advaita conception of *Ajnana* or the principle of *Ignorance*. *Ajnana* may be wrongly understood as absence of knowledge. The nature of *Ajnana* is 'I do not know', it is best experienced in deep sleep. This *Ajnana*, which is treated as the world cause from the subjective side, is ignorance in general. In our conscious moments the ignorance of a particular thing, say of a pen, implies the knowledge of some other particular thing. That is, a particular cognition, for instance of a pencil, must be at the basis of particular absense of cognition, say,

of a pen. But ignorance that is universal cannot be treated as the absence of particular cognitions. For if it were so, universal ignorance must be the absence of every cognition, but after deep sleep we say that we are sure of having no cognition, which surity is impossible without some form of knowledge. Hence, *Ajnana* is not mere absence of cognition, but a distinct and positive entity cognised as such. So the interpretation of Advaita as saying that this world is nothing is due to not noticing this nuance in the meaning of *Ajnana*. And *Ajnana* is the same as *Maya* only considered from the subjective side.

## VI

*Maya* again saves the eternal perfection of the Absolute in Advaita. Its object, as said above, is neither real nor unreal. Though as not unreal it is an object of experience, as not real it can never affect the real which is the Absolute. And just as in ordinary illusion, when it is detected we feel that the true object has all along been there even during the time of illusion, the concept of *Maya* implies and safeguards the eternal presence of the Absolute in its perfection. If its object were to be real, the Absolute could be obtained only by including the real. But as illusions are continuously being experienced, the Absolute would have to be treated as continually growing, and not as eternally perfect. But the Absolute is eternally perfect, and only as eternally perfect is it the implication of our finite consciousness. Hence the object of illusion has to be treated as not real. The view that error contributes to truth does not mean that error becomes part and

parcel of truth, that all erroneous judgments are somehow included in the system of truth, but that error leads to truth or helps its discovery. Now, just as the object of illusion does not become part of the empirical world and implies even during its own life the presence of the empirical world, the empirical world as the object of *Maya* does not become part of the Absolute and implies its eternal presence as its own basis.

## VII

There is a tendency among some metaphysicians of the West to interpret the objects of *Maya* as objects of fancy or phantasy. These objects are sometimes called essences; they are the forms of existence. Existence is the real with which we are in contact in our practical life; but the forms have no existence. These essences are the same whether in real existence or in illusion or in imagination. Apart from the question of the tenability of the view, it cannot be correct interpretation of the Advaita doctrine, according to which the objects of imagination possess only *Tuchhasatta*. They are not the objects of *Maya* which possess *Pratibhasikasatta* or the existence of the appearance of existence, and *Vyavaharikasatta* or the existence necessary for our actions. The objects of *Maya* must be experienced as existent, though regarded as not real. That is why they are regarded as not unreal also. Further, the view examined separates form from existence, which creates a number of difficulties. It is not mere existence for which we live in this world, but for the forms; and if the forms of imagination are the same as the forms of existence,

there need be no real strife for the possession of the latter.

## VIII

When all that has been said is thoughtfully considered, it becomes easy to understand why the concept of *Maya* is so often misunderstood, and the word slipperily used. The word is highly technical and full of nuances. Its peculiarity lies in, and the difficulty of understanding it is due to, its connoting something which is neither real or unreal. The author of *Nyayamrta* questions the Advaitin how a thing which is not real can fail to be unreal. The word unreal is of course ambiguous. It is commonly used to denote both the imaginary and the illusory. But there is difference between the two. In spite of the common usage, which is often loose and ambiguous, philosophy which has to be logical should distinguish between the two. The unreal is that which is experienced as non-existent. But the critic of Advaita overlooks the fact that the object of illusion is an object of perception, and so existent though only for the time being. we are never afraid of the imaginary snake however poisonous. But the illusory snake terrifies us. So our experience of illusion is of a different kind from that of the unreal. The impact of a world not ourselves, with the implied hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, are absent in the merely imaginary, but present in the illusory. Again, this concept is not to be confused with the view mostly found in Western idealisms that error is and is not truth; that is, error is truth in its element, but is not truth when taken in isolation. For *Maya* is neither real nor unreal. It is a unique fact which has to be recognised

as such, though as distinct from, and as having its basis in, the real. The concept of *Maya* applies only to the forms of existence; for the whole phenomenal world, according to Advaita, consists of forms and names. And these forms, because they are actually perceived, are not unreal; yet, as they are different from their


truth which is the Absolute and on which they depend for their existence, they are not real. The temporal world of forms presupposes the Absolute as its eternal basis. And with reference to this eternal basis, the temporal world is *Maya*, which is neither real nor unreal.

## A TALE

(WRITTEN ON "MOTHERS' DAY" IN GENEVA)

*By Jean Herbert.*

[Monsieur Jean Herbert of the League of Nations is a lover of India and her culture. He is at present translating Swami Vivekananda's works into French, and has already published the translation of Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and three other lectures.]

 NCE upon a time, there was an old mother, loving and wise, who had shared with her many children the best of all she had. Material riches were scanty in her house, but she gave them many rare and precious gifts,—courage, independence, intelligence, ambition, strength, reason, spirituality.

A day came when the children thought themselves grown up, and decided to live on their own, away from their mother. And the physical separation soon grew into something deeper. While they used many of the powers which they had received, they forgot many of the lessons which they had been taught. Spirituality went, then ethics, then brotherly love, and many other treasures.

The children began to forget that they were all one family, they saw themselves as so many different individuals, so many rival units, and they began to quarrel and to fight.

When they thought of their mother, they would often deny and despise

her. What use could the old woman be in their new world, in what seemed to them the only real world? She was not up-to-date, she was hopelessly handicapped in the struggle for life, she spent her time in prayer and meditation, treasuring old obsolete thoughts and ideas. When they tried to drag her into the mad whirl and make her "enjoy life", she would nod gently and reply, "I am too old now to play with dolls." And when one or another of the children came and struck and robbed her, she would not hit back, as any sensible modern person would, but she just blessed them. Indeed the old lady was past all hope!

And so the children went on with their mad games. They amassed wealth and lost it again. They amassed knowledge and used it for destroying their brothers. Many of them were killed in fratricidal wars, and many were maimed. So much so that fear began to enter into them. The most clear-sighted realised that they were heading for wholesale des-

truction, and that the wonderful inventions and innovations into which they had put all their effort and all their cleverness might soon fall upon them and crush them.

And some of them began to think again of the old mother and of those long-despised treasures which she had been keeping for them all the while. And they started to wonder whether after all it was not she who could save them, whether it was not she who held the great secret, the precious "sesame" to truth and to real happiness.

And when they looked into her face, they saw her eyes beaming with

love as if she said : Yes, you are still my children, even though you forgot it. I have a nice hot meal waiting for you, and nice clean sheets in your beds. During all your games, all your playing and romping, you have grown strong, you have made many beautiful and useful things which I never had in the house. But you don't know how to use them. Come to me, all you little Western nations, come to old Mother India, and I shall teach you how all your great discoveries can be used for the good of us all, and you need no longer live in fear and trembling.

## SUFFERING AND GRACE

*By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.*

[In this article Mr. Ramakrishnan throws much light on the problem of evil and suffering in life.]

**T**HE ancient seers have affirmed in unmistakable terms that out of joy was this world born, that in joy does it exist, and that unto joy will it return. But in spite of this clear assurance of wise men, we, who are ordinary mortals, feel that human life is a prolonged agony. This earth of ours seems to us to be a sorry planet, and we are, as it were, in a vale of tears. Life on earth is a sob, a sigh, a moan. We come into the world weeping, and depart from here wailing. Man is but a pendulum between a tear and a smile. Laughter and mirth, poetry and song are rare commodities indeed. As the poet says, our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought ; we look before and after, and pine for what is not. Hunger and disease, poverty and death are familiar sights to us.

Earthquakes and wars are only the bigger brothers to the thousand minor calamities that worry us at every step of our march through life. Widows and orphans, beggars and paupers make us feel that the earth is a hell. It is misery that is our constant companion. We are eternally wedded to sorrow.

Some of our miseries, of course, are of our own making, but a good many come to us unsought and quite unexpectedly. We are often unable to explain the how and why of happenings. A millionaire is hurled into poverty in no time, and an young man of brilliant promise is snatched from our midst by the cruel hand of death. To many of us life is a burden which we would willingly cast away, had we the power. But who knows to what fresh miseries death is the door ?



The regarding of human life as a great misery is not a fancy of diseased brains, nor merely the conviction of weaklings, pessimists and failures in life. It would seem to have hoary sanction behind it. It was the sight of human misery that drove the Buddha to seek for light, and the tenets of Buddhism centre round the fact of earthly life being a misery. The Gita declares that this worldly existence is evanescent and unhappy. It is a common experience to find even in those who are blessed with all the so-called good things of life—money, honour, success—a deep undercurrent of melancholy. In most of us a feeling of heaviness is always deep-seated.

It is also a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that as we advance in civilisation, our miseries increase rather than decrease. As our tastes become finer, our sorrows become sharper. As our desires multiply, dissatisfaction assails us in a hundred new ways. To the primitive man, perhaps, the origin and the end of sorrow lay in hunger and physical disease. But we who are cultured are easily affected by factors like fame, honour, social position, status, public appreciation. As we grow intellectually vaster and mentally keener, we are only creating more gateways for the use of that artful invader on our peace and happiness—discontent.

Nor is this passage from sorrow to sorrow, this almost ceaseless subjection to melancholy, the sole monopoly of the common run of humanity. We find from the study of history and biography, that some of the most gifted men and women down the ages, persons whom now we adore in temples as beacon-lights to huma-

nity, have had their own share of acute suffering and misery. Philosophers, wise men and devotees who lived and walked with God, and on whom divine grace must naturally have been showered in abundance have been subjected to great suffering. Jesus Christ was the very son of God, and yet only a crucifixion was in store for him. Joan of Arc is now revered as a saint, and yet the reward she had for her great task of national regeneration was being thrown into the fire. And the numbers are legion of honest men and women who have had to ascend the gallows for the crime of offending the State or the Church by trying to stick to their deeply and honestly felt convictions. Rama, the impersonation of all that is noble and good, was exiled to the forest. The Pandavas who were the bosom friends of Lord Krishna had to suffer similarly. Harischandra had to suffer for his devotion to truth. Our Puranas contain numerous references to virtue and goodness being victimised by what seems to us a perverse destiny. Mankind has often been slow to recognise and applaud true worth. No prophet has been honoured in his own time, says the proverb. Recent examples also show that suffering is almost an inevitable adjunct to greatness. Many incidents in Swami Vivekananda's life, for instance, fill us with a sense of bewilderment. This man who was gifted through and through, and was destined to make history in many a department of national life, this saint who was a shining example of practical wisdom, and a past master in the art of meditation, this seer and prophet who was a man with a mission, who heralded a new era

in higher international relations, and whose labours are bearing richer and richer fruit in our own generation—this son of God was not exempt from the trials and hardships to which common men are exposed. He had to taste direst poverty, and on his young shoulders fell the huge burden of maintaining a fairly large family used to affluence and decent comfort. And apart from the physical inconvenience which this poverty brought him, he was also subjected to painful searchings of the heart and storms in the regions of the soul. Again when he went to America and opened the eyes of the West to the glory of Eastern wisdom, when he acquired world-fame and wide recognition, just at a time when one would feel that divine grace was descending on him in profusion, he was often the victim of vile misrepresentation and base calumny, and vested interests even spread false rumours questioning the moral strength of this Suka-deva among men. It is beyond the point we discuss here that Swami Vivekananda was not affected by such a mischievous campaign, but his cause was only strengthened by such a mischievous campaign, but anyhow it is mystifying why at all in a world ordered by a wise Providence, a Prophet whose life is a poem of self-sacrificing service should have been the target of foul abuse and malicious propaganda.

This naturally sets us thinking. This paradox of even gifted men not being free from the afflictions attendant upon ordinary lives needs to be explained.

Calm thinking will show that, as already hinted, what we consider to be suffering may not appear to the great ones in the same light. We

may pity Jesus for the crucifixion, but to him it was the logical fulfilment of a life of resignation unto the Divine Will. If he had trembled before the cross, the words, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!' would not have escaped from his lips. Moreover, suffering, far from being a negation of divine grace, is often the proof of it. In the case of the great ones whose character has been perfected, suffering serves to set off their golden qualities. Suffering in their case is the urge to greater manifestation of inner worth. It is as if the Lord places them in particularly distressing circumstances only to make them effectively bring out the deeper graces of their soul, for the benefit of ordinary men and women. We have to squeeze the flower in order to extract from it its scent. In the case of ordinary mortals, suffering is a great aid to the perfection of character. Misery chisels the angularities of our being, and contributes effectively to the flawless shaping of our character. It is the school where we learn to throw away the undesirable elements in our constitution. Misery makes us stronger in build and chaster in spirit. Above all, misery helps us to think perennially of God. A divine discontent is the basis of philosophical enquiry. It is the feeling of want, the sense of our lacking something that is vital, the consciousness of our being imperfect in some measure, that goads us on along the path of progress. It is only when there arises a thirst from the soul that we ask for a drink divine. When we feel that things are all right with us, when we feel supremely happy in the midst of the (perishable) things of the universe, we give our-

selves up to a feeling of self-satisfaction and false contentment. Such a feeling is pernicious to the development of the higher life.

It is to awaken us from such a feeling of pseudo self-sufficiency that the Lord sends us now and then reminders in the form of misery. Our wealth and our relatives and all the things which we consider as particularly and solely ours, and on which our happiness is based, are removed from us with startling suddenness, and we are made to stand friendless, forlorn, poor,—and then our thoughts go to the One Being who alone is ours for all time and in all circumstances. It is said of Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, that she prayed to the Lord to keep her always in the midst of suffering, as in suffering alone one's thoughts naturally turns Godward.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that so long as we inhabit the body we must pay 'taxes' in the form of disease and suffering. The body is composed of the elements, and being gross, it must inevitably be subject to the law of growth and decay.

The story is told of the saint Pava-hari Baba that when once he was bitten by a cobra, he only said that the cobra was a Messenger from the Beloved. This incident illustrates that, to the great ones, suffering too is a manifestation of divine grace. It is this attitude of regarding misery also as a proof of divine grace that has to be cultivated by us. Such an attitude takes away from misery its sharp tooth.

So long as we are in the conditioned world we cannot hope to experience unalloyed happiness. Joy and sorrow are the obverse and reverse of the same coin, and both have their uses

for us. Swami Vivekananda has said that in addition to worshipping God in his benign aspect, we must also learn to adore Him in His sterner aspect. We take naturally to a God wreathed in smiles and ever bestowing grace on us, but we must also worship God in terror and death, in pestilence and suffering. Not merely Vishnu, the Kalyana-Purusha (the eternal Bridegroom), but also Rudra Deva, the Destroyer,—He whose abode is the burial ground, and who is besmeared in ashes and is the symbol of complete renunciation—must claim our allegiance. Not only Lakshmi, the abode of all prosperity, but also Kali with her garland of human skulls and her waist-chain of severed hands must be worshipped by us. As Swami Vivekananda sang in a moment of inspiration.

Who dares misery love  
And hug the form of Death,  
Dance in Destruction's dance,  
To him the Mother comes.

The Gita also preaches that the man of wisdom must look upon misery and happiness with the same eye.

In the light of the foregoing remarks, misery appears to us to be really a thing of beauty, at any rate, of utility. Ignorant men, when they see a good and honest person in trouble, foolishly blame God, and doubt if divine wisdom governs the universe at all. Many even say that God is blind. But who knows the purpose behind the misery inflicted on an individual? The child thinks that it is put to needless suffering when the mother forces unpalatable medicines into its system. But surely the mother knows better what is good and wholesome for the child.

So too, in our case, God, the Mother, is the best judge of what is beneficial to us. From this point of view, the man whom the world regards as 'unlucky' may not be unlucky at all, for his 'ill-luck' may imperceptibly help the rapid evolution of his soul. Tears may help to wash away our sins, and sighs and sobs may make us purer.

The way of wisdom, therefore, lies in our calmly putting up with seemingly unpleasant experiences in life in the faith that what may be unpalatable to the tongue may after all be wholesome to the system. Misery is a greater teacher than pleasure. When once we realise that

this life of ours is only a passing phase, only a gateway to a life beyond, only a means to a noble end, we will get the conviction that suffering is only a smile shrowded in frowns. For, the Lord who is our base and our goal is perfect goodness; and when He seems to beat us, He really kisses us lovingly, and His angry looks hide a tender and well-meaning heart. And when we feel that He chides us through misery and suffering, He is all the while blessing us. Even when He places us in the shade, we are still really basking in the sunshine of His grace.

## THE BUDDHA

*By Prof. Heinrich Zimmer*

*(Concluded from last issue)*

[Dr. Zimmer, Professor of Sanskrit in the Heidelberg University, is one of the well-known orientalists of Germany. The present article is a translation from German. We are indebted to Dr. V. N. Sharma, Ph.D., (Heidel.) for the translation.]

**U**NLIKE the adepts of other religions, the Buddhist is always in danger of being misunderstood either as a thinker or as a religious man. Moreover, he is always in danger of getting himself entangled in the midst of the smaller shrines of his path. This path of Buddhism is known as Yoga, but in quite a different sense from what we usually understand by the term, for Yoga has now taken a special form. Yoga in India is itself much older than Buddhism, for it traces back its origin to the Pre-Aryan Indian traditions. It has many objects, viz., ascetic purification, magical supre-

macy of the individual by gaining extraordinary powers, and the realisation of the Supreme Reality. It is its function to direct itself always to a particular image which is already presented before the will, to an image of the magic personality into which one wants to be transformed, to the image of the god into whose boundless domain one longs to enter, to the image of the innermost One that can be experienced and that stands beyond the shackles of death and time, and without any interference from outside. Even though the aims of Yoga touch the innermost depths of life, the spirit has transformed

them into symbols and images. Hence these symbols and images are interlaced with the domain of spirituality. It is already taken for granted that something which shall be experienced as a Supreme Reality is supposed to be existing. Yet the question is, how to behold this reality, this really existing One.

On this metaphysical reality bases the kingdom of mysticism. Yet this metaphysical Reality rejects all mysticism from Buddhism, because Buddhism as such is through and through metaphysical in its essence, and as such it is unmythical even though some of its schools might have transgressed from its original path into the domain mysticism. Therefore Buddhism appears as an angel of death to the mystical and magical thought of ancient India. We shall see now how the speculative spirit, which demands attention for its constructive thought, dwindles away. In our own history we could see how this archaic phase of thought is buried under the acons of the Logos. Its beginning could be seen in the genius epoch of the Greeks, and another phase of it in the catholic philosophy. As the time passed, the national genius of the younger nations and races attained their majority, and the pure idea of the Greek Logos vanished. The universal conception of the citizen takes a new phase, under the influence of the spirit of self-criticism. To-day this process can be seen taking a lively form in the philosophical-historical spirit. This spirit could be recognised already in Dilthey's *Torso*, who is acknowledged on all sides as a critic of the "historical rationality" having for his motto that the sources of historical understanding lie in

experience and understanding. This is also signified by Nietzsche in his new psychology. The later schools of thought have upheld this through their sociology of knowledge. Thus the almightiness of the Logos gives way to the all-embracing functionalism, and our rational spirit develops this functionalism through its critical attitude, whereas to the mystical spirit of India, this functionalism takes a new form through the path of Yoga which gives a special place to the individual uniqueness. On the other hand, the domain of the exact science, unaffected by the world visions and the historical conceptions, produces for itself leading ideas for the life, which are fatalistic. The Buddhist Yogin, now awakened, uses them so as to balance the naive reality, for to him all these are mere conventions of the "Not Otherwise Knowing". Wherever he goes, he remains now as a free personality under the powers which have been formulated as laws by this exact science.

The secret of the naive reality, the Maya, is only comprehensible in the spiritual science that unveils to us a structure which is not the convention of the spirit. This reality, which has power on us, the "Nature", is only traceable in formulas, and these formulas give us the power over the reality. Its vehicle is the technic, and with it, the naive life asserts itself. The Buddha would not be of any help to us if he would have merely produced magic and miracles like other Yogins who preceded him and came after him. Something else is his human magic.

Arising out of the veil of the Maya, the Buddha cast off the mystical spirit of India, for, this had been his

dream. Therefore, to him the world and the I are still different. He does not know about the self-standing structure which lies in the naive real, whether one acknowledges it or rejects it. The Buddha does not want to be a mediator of a legalised definition of the Maya. He acknowledges only its symptoms on the personality of the individual. He wants to heal them right from their sources. Even if he would have offered a construction of the Maya, it would have been a great temptation for those who desire to remain in the veils of the Maya. Moreover, this would have been a great fault in the principle of his untheoretical therapeutic itself. "To these pay no attention."

Even the mystery of the Real does not throw any light on the Path, which the Buddha shows to us. It does not touch the man to whom the Buddha approaches, the personality, the bearer of the destiny who asks for himself where and how he would really stand. To him the pure science does not give an answer. Hence the last formula is merely piecemeal, and not a complete one. The judgment of the mind it rejects, as it cannot be proved, being nothing but mere thought. Such questions, moreover, are unscientific for the exact sciences. That is the tragedy on the path of understanding; it cannot be completed. Though each completed step is full of meaning and significance, the kingdom of the science as a whole is beyond any question. On all sides of the path it lays new foundations of progressive technic, yet it condemns all efforts to utilise its formulas as absolute knowledge transcending the fleeting spheres.

He who asks for the mystery of the personality, for the bearer of the

destiny, for its source in himself, finds an answer only in the experience, and not in words. The Path of the Buddha touches our new psychology and the soul's therapeutics. It points out a new technic of experience and to this new field Buddhism is an elder brother. Buddha has traversed many an ocean unhindered, whereas the new field has just put on sails. However, he is a foreigner to it, because he speaks a language strange to it; yet the object of both is the same. The question that we Westerners want to be answered is how far can we open ourselves to this mystery. The "Golden Petal" which Richard Wilhelm placed before us can be understood only when we can grasp this secret. However, it is not an easy one and cannot be secured all at once. The Western psychiatrist is only a patient before the Buddha, the teacher of all healing sciences (Bhaishajya Guru).

The method of the Buddhist healing is a kind of the highest activity of all-sided concentration. It makes its patients awakened, prudent and courageous. However, one cannot discover the inner world with it, but can only complete something which is already known. It is not a thirst for knowledge. All the meetings on the Path must vanish away, all the values must direct us to something which is beyond the sphere of the names. It is an explanation that might as well disappear in the course of time. Buddhist therapeutics is radical.

This therapeutics knows very well the regions in which the powers flow, out of which the individuality is nourished. It is neither a reservoir nor a treasure, inherited and unfinishable. But here, like everywhere, is

everything a process to transform oneself into life which can be experienced. Again it is like a stream that flows without any intermission, ready to carry one away in its beginningless current. Nirvana hence means to make this stream dry up, to make this fire, which gains always new logs, extinguish. All conditions of destinations that point out what we have been, what we are, and what might become of us, are already there. To transcend these limitations, these boundaries of character and destination of self-created heredity, is its aim. The "Middle Path" which the Buddha shows us is meant for this purpose alone.

To these destinations belongs as well the vitality, the quantum of life appropriate to every one. This is given in the hands of an awakened, which we can see referred in a story from the last days of the Buddha. He happened to rest in a place, which he very often visited on his wanderings, and where he later breathed his last. His glance passed over the beautiful country, over all the sanctuaries around the city, which he was beholding before him. He saw all those scenes, and said to that disciple of his who used to accompany him on his pilgrimages, "Coloured and beautiful is the earth. Lovely is the life of the people." The Buddha continuing said that an Awakened like him could, if he wanted, live a whole world's age. The Lord said this three times, but the disciple kept quiet. The Buddha sent him away for a while, and the tempter, who had been watching him from all the sides of his life, without however being able either to entice him or to frighten him, approached and whispered to him, "Now at once go away from

here. The Buddha's work is to show the way to gods and men, and this is already completed." The Buddha did not reject him. He consoled him telling, "Be content ; not far away is my departure. After three months I shall pass away." It is said "with consciousness and a clear sense, he gave up what one can call life." According to his own opinion, he dismissed from himself all impulses to live and exist. The significance of this story is that one could gain to such complete control over oneself. It also means, one must take life as a phenomenon which cannot be expressed with signs like death and time. It is a reality that stands amidst all these phenomena, untouched by the fleeting time in any form.

Here lies the fascination of Buddhism and its immortal results. Here one observes the all-embarrassing tolerance towards the world conceptions and morals of the different races and nations out of which it emanates. It is the sublime indifference. Men need restrictions to bind themselves with the society, and also they want a heaven above all these and a path that can lead them to it. They long after an experience of a limitless reality. It is therefore a delicate task to speak of Buddhism. It appears on the arena of life like the boy who is depicted to us in our holy pictures of the Middle Ages, sitting at the feet of the holy Augustine. Addressed by the holy one, he stops emptying the waters of the mighty ocean with a conch. This picture conveys to us an attitude of resignation. This illustration is also very familiar to the Buddhist monks. Perhaps it might have been handed over to us from them. A Brahmin boy happens to lose his chest of

jewels while travelling on the sea. He must have it back at any cost, so he sits down on the shore and begins without any discouragement to empty the waters. In the beginning the god of the waters laughs at him. However, by and by, the boy's unwavering sincerity frightens him, and at last he appears before the Brahmin boy, and gives him back his treasure. The Christian legend takes the boy with the conch as a symbol that God is unfathomable to the human understanding. It means as well that the individual should give up all the limitations of humanity before he would achieve his aim. In India this is shown through the unbreakable will of the boy. Fidelity to the great resolution, which works miracles, is the greatest example to all self-conquest as well as world-conquest. How could one bring home the real significance of Buddhism with words! The initiated in Japan would prefer signs and gestures.

Mere words, it is said, would only point out the way, but they cannot make one experience it. The language is the mirror of the naive reality. In this, the sense does not recognise any quarrel about the sayings that could express its real being. Buddhism looks at these as if they were the vehicles not useful to be kept. A word is a little picture of such a vehicle. Buddhism sees these boats which move on the mighty seas of life. In the night of the Unawakened, the Buddha, the Incorporation of Truth, pours out from above, his light of the full moon. Those who are in the boats can see his reflection on the waters. Everyone thinks the golden path of the reflection of light comes to his own boat. It seems even as if it comes only to his boat. So each sect might think that it possesses the real truth alone. But they ought to know that they are mere boats, and the whole sea is a vessel of melted gold, a basin full of light.

(Concluded.)

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE YOGA VASISTA

*By R. K. Valtekar, B. Sc.*

[The following is a review of *The Philosophy of the Yoga Vasista* by P. L. Atreya, M.A. D.Litt., published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. Price Rs. 12, Pp. 658.]

**H**LL students of philosophy, especially those who can approach the study of Sanskrit works only through their English presentation, owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sjt. B. L. Atreya for bringing out in book form this thesis on the philosophy of Yoga Vasista, which he submitted to the Benares Hindu University and was accepted with

approval for the degree of Doctor of Letters.

The author of the Yoga Vasista, as the name itself indicates, is Vasista, the chief preceptor, at the court of King Dasaratha. The young prince Rama, the beloved son and the light and life of Dasaratha, gets disgusted with the world before he has passed his teens. He with-



draws himself from all the usual activities of life, and from royal pleasure with which he is surrounded. The king rightly becomes uneasy at the show of the premature renunciation, and not knowing how to deal with the situation, he calls in the aid of the royal sage, Vasista. He summons Rama before the saint. Finding himself in the presence of an able counsellor and sympathetic friend, Rama gives free vent to all the pent up feelings and doubts that had depressed him and made him turn his mind away from the world and its activities. "Childhood, youth, body and riches," said Rama, "all are unstable. They unceasingly pass from one condition to another like the waves of the ocean. Life is unstable as the flame of a lamp placed in open air, and the splendour of all the objects is as momentary as the flash of lightning. The creator of the world seems to be like a playful child, who quickly changes his toys, having soon become disgusted with them. Life is fast fleeting; death is awfully cruel; youth is extremely evanescent! Everything is under the sway of death and decay; all relations are chains of bondage; enjoyments are fatal diseases; and desires are tantalising mirages. All thinking is egoistic. All things come into existence only to disappear. All human beings are self-deluded to be entrapped into the snares of desires and thereby to be afflicted with the troubles of birth and death. Sons, wives, riches, etc., are considered to be the elixir of life, but none of them can be of any ultimate good to us. They are no better than the temporary soothing sensations, during a prolonged swoon due to poison . . . I can bare myself to be sawed alive! But

the pain accruing from worldly desires and ambitions, and from the ways of the world is utterly unbearable". Continuing in this strain to give free expression to his pessimistic vision of life, Rama concludes by inquiring of Vasista, "Is there any better state of existence which is free from suffering, ignorance and grief, and is full of unconditional good?" What is the most properly desirable end of life? How should one live in this inconsistent world? How can one obtain unchanging and perpetual joy within oneself? What is the method, what is the science and art of saving this life from undesirable occurrences? Let me know, sir, the best possible way of becoming free from the sufferings of life,—whether it be by oneself engaging in the activities of life, or by withdrawing from them."

These are the questions Vasista is called upon to answer by his royal ward and disciple. These questions, fundamental in their very conception, and as vast as the universe and as deep as life, are sufficient to stagger the mind of any ordinary thinker and philosopher. The responsibility is made no less heavy by the thought that on the satisfactory nature or otherwise of the replies to these questions depends not merely the enlightenment of a youthful mind but the happiness of an old king and the future of an empire. But Vasista is neither an ordinary thinker nor philosopher. He combines in himself all the acumen of an astute philosopher and all the subtle experiences of a mystic Yogin, with all the sympathetic love of a tender mother and the fresh and simple joy of a child. As such Dasaratha could

not have sought the services of a better man to dispel the cloud of despondency overcasting the life of Rama. Vasista readily and willingly undertakes to solve all the doubts and questions oppressing the mind of the young prince. How completely he succeeds in achieving this can be easily guessed from the fact that prince Rama no more thinks of renouncing this life.

The peculiarly simple method followed by Vasista throughout the book can only be understood by remembering the young age of Rama and the special didactic method followed in those remote days. Reading the book as it comes down to us to-day through the centuries, we have to admit, as the author rightly remarks, a want of systematic arrangement and the consequent repetition of many ideas, sometimes apparently contradicting themselves, throughout this whole work. These defects are more than compensated, by the unequivocal manner followed by Vasista in whatever he has to say, making it more than clear by means of similes, analogies, illustrations, and simple stories which even the quite ordinary man cannot fail to understand. Mr. Atreya, however, is to be heartily congratulated for presenting to us the book in a very systematically arranged form with proper attention to the unity of the subject matter. The author has freely compared the opinions and conclusions of the ancient sage Vasista on all important matters with the opinions of almost all the leading thinkers, philosophers, psychologists and scientists of our own day, in the East and the West. The result is surprisingly marvellous, for on almost all the important issues

these modern authorities and Vasista see eye to eye, which convincingly proves the depth of wisdom of the ancient sage, and makes us regret the fact of the book not having received the study and publicity demanded by its contents.

What then are the salient points of Vasista's philosophy? The author of the present book has succinctly summarised these in 27 pages from page 553 to 580 under different heads. "Life, as it is usually lived by the ignorant, is full of misery and suffering. It is characterised by perpetual change, death, deception and imperfection at every step. There is a craving in us, however, not only to escape from misery, change, death, ignorance and imperfection, but also to be happy, perfect and wise. When this craving is strong, mind is ripe for appreciating and understanding the philosophy.....Ignorance or the lack of the knowledge of the nature of the Self and of the world is the root cause of all our sufferings and troubles.....There is nothing like fate making us miserable or happy in spite of ourselves. We are the makers of our destiny by our own efforts. One should, therefore, never give way to the evils of life, and should always make efforts to conquer them.....Direct cognition is the ultimate source of all our knowledge. There is no other means of knowing anything rightly..... There is no essential difference in the nature of the contents of dream, imagination and waking experience. All these are of the same nature, and are felt to be so when they are being experienced. All contents of experience, of whatever thing it may be, may be termed as ideas, and we might say, nay, it is a fact realised

to be true, in higher experience, that the objective world is an ideal construction of the mind, is a work of imentation like the world of dreams, and has no existence apart from the mind.....The extension of space, duration of time, and the mass of bodies are also subjective ideas and are relative to the experiencing individuals. This doctrine is very much similar to what has been scientifically demonstrated by Einstein....Thought is the most potent force in the world. Every one becomes what he constantly thinks himself to be. Our world, our environment, our bodies, our powers and capacities change in accordance with the thinking. All our limitations are the limitations of our thought. All sufferings and miseries are consequent upon our perverse thinking, and can be cured by right thinking. There is no other agency except our own thinking that determines our destiny here and hereafter.....The Self in the subject should be identical in essence with the ultimate substance of the objects, the Ultimate Essence of the universe. The Self is the reality that is at the root of the universe, which manifests in all things of the world. The individuality, however changing and impermanent it may be, is not dissolved with the decay of the physical body and its total dissolution by death. The body is only an external manifestation of the inner will-to-be, which, with countless desires and hopes, persists to continue as an individual mind, and will, as a consequence of the unfulfilled desires surely experience another body and another world. What the loss of the physical body does is, only that it shuts off the individual from the experience of the

world which is relative to the senses. ....The absolute and ultimate reality is not only the self, and essence of all forms, the source of all movements, but also the home of bliss, nay, bliss itself, which consciously or unconsciously we are all seeking but seeking in wrong places. ....Knowledge for Vasista is not a mere satisfaction of 'the natural desire for knowledge as an end in itself'. Nor is it a means to worldly gain of money, name and honour as it is generally supposed in the present time. People who gather knowledge for these purposes are mere buyers and sellers of knowledge, rather than true lovers and lovers of knowledge which only the truly wise men are. We have not only to *know*, but also to *be* and to *feel*, for all these aspects are at the root, One, and so expand *pari pasu*. As our individuality not only consists of intellect but also of emotion and of activity, which are identically the same at the root, and as the self is not only Absolute Consciousness but also Absolute Rest and also Absolute Bliss, the practice of self-realisation may proceed along three ways, or along any one of them, for they are only the three aspects of the same process....." Such in brief is the philosophy of Vasista which was revealed to him by Brahma (the Cosmic Mind), and which he realised in his own experience to be true. He also found it to be in perfect accord with reason (*yukti yukta*), and capable of being realised by everyone through his own rational investigation (*vichara*). Thus reason, intuition, and revelation are not at variance for Vasista.

In the last chapter the author gives his critical estimate of the

philosophical position of the work and ably compares it with the other ancient and modern systems.

The want of an index is the only

desideratum that one feels compelled to point out in spite of the detailed contents which to some extent have doubtless compensated for its absence.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

[OR THE GOSPEL OF DIVINE LOVE ACCORDING TO SAGE NARADA]

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

[Swami Thyagisananda has till now been translating the Svetasvatara Upanishad which will soon come out as a book. He will hereafter translate the Bhakti Sutras, first of Narada and then of Shandilya, and expound the doctrine of Divine Love on the basis of these aphorisms.]

### INTRODUCTION

The Narada Bhakti Sutras, or Narada's Book of Aphorisms on Divine Love, is too well-known to need any introduction to our readers. Along with the Shandilya's Bhakti Mimamsa, it forms the standard authority on the *bhakti* cult in India. It does not purport to be an original composition but assumes only the humble role of a *vyakhyana* or commentary, as may be gathered from the very first *sutra* itself. A commentary in the ordinary sense it certainly is not, in matter or in form. A perusal of the book will convince every one that it is really a transcript from the author's own life and experience. No doubt, the author has been helped much by the experiences of the *bhaktas* and *rishis* who had gone before him, as recorded in our scriptures, but they come in only as corroborating his own experiences in the field, or as differing from his own. While he sticks to his own view in preference to those of others, he does not stoop to criticise others, but satisfies himself that the interests of truth can best be safeguarded by merely pointing out gently how his own experiences compel him to differ

from others, and leaving the reader free to exercise his own individual judgment to choose for himself out of the common stock of spiritual experience.

It is not quite certain who the author of this work is. Opinions have been hazarded by those who consider themselves privileged to speak with authority on points of forgotten history, that the work could not have been composed earlier than about the 12th century by some unknown author, and that it must have been passed off as the production of the well-known Rishi Narada. We do not presume to intrude on the special province of scholars, but until something definite can be pointed out to negative the ordinary accepted opinion, we think it safe to be guided by the traditional view about the authorship of the work. And a perusal of the book shows that it deserves to have come from the pen of the great Rishi Narada himself, or one like him.

Narada is one of the well-known figures in the *puranic* and *bhakti* literature of India. Although he appears to assume various roles in

various works—as a relative of the Rishi Parvata, as the Lord of Satyavati (the sister of Vasishta's wife Arundhati), as a counsellor of Kubera, as one present at the *sarpa* sacrifice of Janamejaya and so on—we are not much concerned here with these aspects of his life. But as the inspirer of Vyasa and Valmiki for writing the Bhagavata and Ramayana, he has secured a safe corner in the hearts of all genuine devotees and lovers of literature. As the teacher of Dhruva, Prahlada and a host of other devotees of undying fame, he is best remembered as one who is always at hand as a safe friend, philosopher and guide in spiritual life, whenever any one deserves such external help, especially when the external surroundings make it too hot for one to live a normal life. Though known as *kalipriya*, or one who is interested in fomenting quarrels, we are never left in the dark as to his real motive, which is nothing else than the good of the world. Born as a *sudra* in the previous life as noted by the Bhagavata, his accidental contact with devotees inspires him to higher efforts in spiritual life, and he finally scales the highest heights of realisation accessible to man, and even earns the right to be considered by a grateful posterity as a *manasaputra* or spiritual son of the great creator (Brahma), fit to be made a messenger by God Himself to the world. That he was well learned in all the sacred lore, and that he had a brilliant and original intellect, is attested to by the innumerable philosophical disquisitions, devotional talks and moral exhortations that stand to his credit in the various Puranas. But the wide range of his studies is best attested to by himself in the Chan-

dogya Upanishad. At the beginning of the seventh chapter of the Upanishad, where we find him approaching the great Rishi Sanatkumara as a suppliant for instruction in the knowledge of Brahman, he recites the various books he had studied. Such study by itself does not give him the necessary peace of mind, which he gets after realising the Atman by sitting at the feet of the great Rishi.

The very name Narada is significant. It is derived as नरस्य धर्मो नारः तत्तददाति इति नारदः. It means one who teaches man what he really is and how to become perfect, or, in the words of the Swami Vivekananda, one who helps man to manifest the perfection or divinity already in him. The word will be easily seen to be a correlative of the words Nara and Narayana, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, and Narada appears to us as the intermediary between God and man.

We thus see how qualified he is to take up the position of a teacher of man. He is one of the *adhikarika-purushas* or souls commissioned with a divine mission, referred to in Brahma Sutra III-3-32, who, in spite of their supreme realisation, are gracious enough to retain a little of their ego so as to be able to lend a helping hand to other struggling souls less fortunate than themselves, or who are willing to place themselves in the hands of God as willing instruments for the service of man, or who prefer the enjoyment of the divine play and the company of the Lord to becoming one with Him. He is the typical *bhakta*, *jnani* and *yogi* in one.

Narada, however, prefers to deal with *bhakti* as being the easiest

and most efficient of all paths, which is available for all irrespective of caste, creed or sex. In their highest flights, *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma* merge into one another, but on the lower steps of the ladder they appear to be different methods of approach to the one unity of spiritual experience. All the *yogas* aim at the purity of the mind, as in the words of Jesus Christ, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The three functions of the mind, intellect, emotion and will have to be purified of the dirt of the ego, and the three *yogas* aim at achieving this. *Jnana yoga* purifies the intellect, *bhakti yoga* the emotions and *karma yoga* the will, and man is free to adopt anyone of these paths in preference to others. But he would do well to attempt a synthesis of all these paths as it would be very helpful to achieving the end more speedily. Those who are by nature more intellectual or emotional or dynamic may prefer to adopt only one of the paths as suits their nature. However, the mind being homogenous in nature, any single path, strenuously pursued must necessarily result in the purity of the whole mind, as physical exercise, though confined to particular organs, such as the hands or the legs, necessarily results in the health of the whole organism. While choosing to write a book on *bhakti* or divine love, Narada does not lose sight of the other paths and accepts them all as helping to achieve the final consummation, and thus we find in these aphorisms a happy synthesis of all the *yogas* as attempted before by Bhagavan Krishna, the *yogesvara*, in the Gita itself. If the Brahma Sutras of Vyasa aim at the knowledge of God and man, and the

Dharma Sutras the service of God and man, the Bhakti Sutras aim at nothing more than completing the scheme by advocating a way for purifying the emotions so as to provide a proper background and motive for the service of God and man.

#### CHAPTER I

अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः । २

अय = Now अतः = therefore भक्ति = the religion of Love व्याख्यास्यामः = we shall expound.

Now<sup>1</sup>, therefore<sup>2</sup>, we shall expound<sup>3</sup> the religion of Love.

Notes—I. Now.—This refers to the best possible conditions under which an exposition of the religion of Love is likely to appeal to a spiritual aspirant. In other words, it is meant to refer to a proper *adhikari* or recipient. A study of any subject will appeal only to one who has an intense desire for knowing the subject, and it is likely to profit only one who has got the capacity to understand, and the readiness to practise, the truth that is taught. In technical language these qualifications are known as *arthitvam* and *samarthyam*. Even if these two are present, if one does not show the necessary interest and attention in the study, and has not sufficient faith in the capacity of the teacher or *sastra* to help him, he is not likely to profit by such study. *Sraddha* or faith, in other words, is another necessary qualification.

These are, however, only general qualifications for taking up the study of any subject. Each *sastra* insists upon certain special qualifications also. For example, as the necessary qualification of a seeker of the knowledge of Brahma, Sri Sankara

insists upon the fourfold fitness (*sadhana chathushtaya sampatti*), consisting of perfection in morality, spirit of renunciation, faith in the words of the spiritual teacher and scriptures, and a yearning for liberation. The *Purvamimamsakas* insist upon a previous study of the Vedas before taking to the study of the *Sutras* of Jaimini and so on. Both these again go to the length of saying that such study is to be confined only to male members of the first three castes, all other members of society being ineligible for the same. The *bhakti sastra* is more liberal in this respect, and is open to all. A belief in the grace of God and in the possibility of escape from *samsara* with His help are the only qualifications for the study of these *sutras*. Even illiteracy is no bar, nor a previous record of vicious life. On this point there are the following authorities : " Even if the most sinful man worships Me and worships no other, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has decided aright. He soon becomes righteous and obtains lasting peace. Proclaim it boldly, O Arjuna, that my devotee never perishes. For those who take refuge in me—women, Vaishyas, Sudras, nay, even they that are born of the womb of sin—attain to the highest state " (*Gita IX, 30-32*). " Every man, even down to the lowest born, has equal right to follow the path of devotion, as is seen from the long line of devotees, like

other objects common to all " (*Shandilya Sutra, 78*)<sup>2</sup>. " I bow to the Almighty Lord, by adoring even whose devotees people like the Kiratas, Hunas, Andhras, Pulkasas, Pulindas, Abhiras, Kankas, Yavanas, Sakas, as well as those who are sinners, purify themselves " (*Bhagavata 18*)<sup>3</sup>.

Untouchable saints like Nandanar, Chockamela, Ravi Das, Kannappar, Tirupana Alvar, and Tirumangai Alvar, and female devotees like Mirabai, Avvayar, and Andal have thus graced this fair land of Bharata Varsha to bear witness to the catholicity of the path of devotion. Moral wrecks like Ajamila, Valmiki and Tondaradi-podi Alvar, Narayana Bhatta, who was author of the famous *Narayaniya*, and Vilwamangal are all shining examples of what the religion of Love can do for redeeming even the worst sinners, however low they might have had fallen. Saints like Ramakrishna, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram and others prove to the hilt that the religion of Love does not stand in need of literacy. There is no doubt, however, that if the student has equipped himself properly before he takes to the study of the *bhakti sastra*, he can profit better by such study. Some such special qualifications are mentioned by Sri Ramanuja. They are : (1) *viveka* or discrimination in fool, (2) *vimoka* or freedom from desires. (3) *abhyasa* or practice, (4) *kriya* or doing good to others, (5) *kalyana* or purity consisting of truthfulness.

1 अपिचेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्य भाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवहितो हिंसः ॥

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छन्ति निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

मां तु पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपिस्तुः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिं ॥

2 आनित्य योन्यधि क्रियते पारंपर्यात्मान्यवत् ।

3 किरातहृणान्त्र पुलिंद पुल्कसा आभीरकंक-  
यवनाः शकादयः ।

येऽन्येऽपि पापा यदुपाश्रयाश्रयाच्छुध्यन्ति तस्मै  
प्रमविष्णवे नमः ॥

*satyam* straightforwardness (*arjavanam*), kindness (*daya*), non-violences (*ahimsa*), charity (*danam*), etc., (6) *anavasadam* or cheerfulness, (7) *anuddharsha* or absence of excessive hilarity.

2. *Therefore*—this expression refers to the reasons that prompted Narada to write on *bhakti* instead of on other topics such as *jnana* or *karma*. His reasons are : (1) *bhakti* by itself leads to realisation and escape from Samsara. (2) It is the easiest of all paths. (3) It is the only path available to men at large. (4) It is a help even to those who aspire for *jnana*. (5) Even *jnanis* after realisation sometimes take to *bhakti* for the sake of the sweetness of loving relationship with Personal God. (6) The most important of all the reasons is his own eagerness to share his bliss with others.

3. *Expound*—The Sanskrit word means to comment upon. But the work under consideration is not at all a commentary in the ordinary sense of the word. What the author perhaps means is that *bhakti sastra* is a commentary on the actual experiences of the devotees, and not a mere speculative philosophy based only on reason. Nor is it only second-hand knowledge interpreted by a mere scholar. For the exposition is based upon the author's own personal experiences as supported by those of others as recorded in the scriptures. Such an interpretation by a realised man is necessary as otherwise people may be carried away by the stories of miracle and supernatural incidents connected with the lives of the *bhaktas* (devotees), and may neglect to put into practice the true spiritual principles illustrated in their lives.]

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Yoga the Science of Health:** By *Eliz Guyot (C. K Kerneiz)*. Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., Paternoster Row, London.

The book is an attempt to present the science of Hatha Yoga in an assimilable form to European readers, and awaken, if possible, practical interest therein among them. Within the short compass of nearly 200 pages the author has attempted to present the theory and practice of some of the exercises of Hatha Yoga in so far as they have a bearing on the science of health. Whatever may be said of the treatment of the vast subject of Hatha Yoga within this small compass, there can be no doubt that the matter and presentation will make a definite appeal to a few at least who are attracted to the ways of healthful living, propounded and experimented in the East, and in India especially.

**Words of Wisdom:** By *Swami Rajesvarananda*. Published by The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Road, Channarayana, Bangalore City. Price, Superior edition Rs. 1-6-0, Popular 0-12-0, Pp. 182.

This book containing 450 numbered paragraphs arranged from the author's diary forms a nosegay of inspiring thoughts on religion and ethics. Although there is no connection between the paragraphs forming each article, the book has an elevated background of spiritual mood and outlook running throughout the work and giving it an inner unity.

Whichever page one may turn and run the eyes over, one senses at once a high moral tone, and perceives a spiritual beauty of concept that cannot fail to induce a reflective reader to think in terms of the sublime and the universal. We wish a wide circulation for this edifying book.



**Sri Ramakrishna. The Saint of Humanity :** By K. Devanathachar. *Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City.* Price 4 as.

The above brochure is a study of Sri Ramakrishna's luminous life in a very small compass. Why the Master is called the saint of humanity becomes amply clear in the course of the book. The outstanding features of this unique life, those especially having an immediate elevating influence over our day to day life, are brilliantly touched upon. Mr. Achar has stressed rightly the devotional aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's life and instructions; for that attitude alone could easily bring spirituality within the reach of the large mass of common men. We welcome this short publication worthy equally of the theme and the occasion.

**Upadesa Saram of Sri Ramana Maharshi :** with English translation and notes by B. V. Narasimhaswami. (2nd. Edn. revised and enlarged.) Published by Niranjanananda Swami, Sarvadhikari, Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai. Price 4 as.

To-day many are the persons who are interested in the Maharshi and his message, not only in India but also in the occident. The necessity is all the more keen therefore for a clear, brief, methodical and well authenticated presentation of the central teachings of the Maharshi with regard to the spiritual problems of man. We find with great pleasure that this neatly printed small book has eminently supplied this need. The present edition embodies also for the first time the special teachings of the Maharshi on the doctrines of Karma, Samadhi, Happiness, etc., as well as on mysticism and doctrine of "the heart." The book with its freshness of outlook and simplicity of exposition will be found to be of real help by minds that are bewildered in the withering atmosphere of academic Vedanta.

**Sri Maharshi :** A biography with 111 illustrations. The 'Sunday Times' Bookshop, Madras. Price 8 as.

We heartily recommend this decently printed life-sketch of Sri Ramana Maharshi to all who wish to know in brief about this great spiritual personality and the scenes of his life.

**Hindu Conception of God and Religion :** By K. M. Das Gupta, B.A., Pleader (Retired). Publisher : Nishi Kanta Das Gupta, B.A., Pleader, Khulna. Price Re. 1.

In the first part of this small book the writer has put in quite ordinary language some of the leading conceptions of Hinduism such as the motherhood of God, the principle of Dharma, spirit of toleration and the like. The second part is devoted to the Hindu system of worship. Both with regards to the ideas and their presentation the book presents a rather sorry performance.

**The Problems of Religion :** By Raghavachari, B.A. Copies can be had of Verai-pada, Ahmadabad. Price 1 Rupee.

In this luminous essay the author presents for the common man a brief description of what real religion is, and how it fulfils a need of humanity which could in no way be supplied otherwise. We hope that the author's modest attempt will be appreciated by all who have faith in religion.

**My Ideas and Ideals :** By S. Banerji. Copies to be had from S. Chand & Co., Delhi.

"It is a work not originally meant for publication," writes the author in his Preface. The impression left by the perusal of the book inclines us to say that it would have been only sagacious if he had stuck to what he meant originally; for what good could possibly be found in taxing the patience of a reader with a book about which the writer admits, "I have destroyed more than I have built?"

**Golden Resources :** By L. V. Narasimha Rao, Santivasali, Guntur.

The plan and execution of this book is not very encouraging. Ideas ranging from Brahman and Paramartha to palmistry, vitamins and Ayurvedic pharmacies all appear here. There is a sad lack of unity, method and clear thought. However the spiritual ideal which the author likes to hold as a means for human happiness will meet with the approval of many.

**Smiles and Tears :** By K. Vaidyanathan, B.A., "Sriniketan", Kosapet, Vellore.

Smiles and Tears is a collection of about ninety poems and nursery rhymes from the pen of Mr. Vaidyanathan. Poetry is the last thing one may attempt with

success in an alien tongue so much so that even if a few lines could catch the ears of cultured readers, the writer has ample reasons for satisfaction. In the present collection, amidst much that is jejune, there are a few pieces which reveal a poetic mood mirrored in a form and language which, if not perfect, is at least free from glaring defects.

**Pilgrims' Staff :** *By Ram B. Motwani, with an introduction by Prof. L. H. Ajwani, M.A. Can be had of Ram B. Motwani, Larkana (Sind.). Price Re. 1.*

A neatly got-up small book of selections in verses culled from various sources by R. B. Motwani dedicated to his father and intended to help and relieve pilgrims on the pathway of life.

**My Master and His Teaching :** *By C. D. Deshmukh, M.A., PH.D., with a foreword by Princess Norina Matchabelli. Published by Mr. Framroze Hormusji Dadachanji, Mehrabad, Ahmednagar, (India). Price 8 as.*

Mr. Deshmukh has tried to bring out some of the impressive features of the life

and teachings of the Mehar Baba in this short work. As a second part to the study is attached a few metrical outpourings of the loyal devotee.

**Bhaja Govindam :** *By Vidwan P. Krishna Murthy, Teacher, Wesley Girls' Normal School, Secunderabad (Deccan). Price 4 as. Can be had of the author "Sita Bhavan", St. Mary's Road, Secunderabad.*

This booklet contains an English rendering of the famous "Dwadasa Manjarika Stotram" of Sri Sankaracharya. The Sanskrit text is given in Telugu script.

**The Mystic Life :** *An introduction to practical Christian Mysticism). The Curtiss Philosophic Book Co., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.*

A dainty little book which can easily be carried in one's pocket. It must be of considerable interest to non-Christians also who wish to have an idea of mysticism, its pursuit in daily life, and how it can help in the solution of so many problems confronting the world.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

**The Ramakrishna Mission Sisumangal Pratisthan, Calcutta, Report for 1935-36.**

The Sisumangal Pratisthan is the only institution of its kind run by the Mission. During its existence of five years it has succeeded in winning universal admiration as an ideal maternity hospital and child welfare centre. The centre provides (a) antenatal care to expectant mothers, (b) hospital and domiciliary maternity service to registered cases, (c) postnatal care to children up to school going age, and (d) training in midwifery and obstetrical nursing to women of good families. All these services are rendered free of charge to poor people. The expectant mother is advised to come to the Pratisthan and register herself early in pregnancy, attend the clinic regularly and follow the doctor's advice religiously. During the past 18 months, 2105 new antenatal cases and 6783 repeated cases were treated. Among the patients treated were Bengalees, Guja-

ratis, Marwaris, Maharatis, Punjabis, Madrasis, Mohammedans and Christians.

The Pratisthan has a well-equipped hospital with 25 beds for labour cases. The hospital is like a home and the nursing arrangement is excellent. The staff is sympathetic and imbued with the spirit of service. One special feature of the hospital is that the new-born babies are kept in a separate Baby Ward. During the reported year and a half 1119 labour cases were attended to in the Hospital, and 368 cases at Home.

In the section for the training of midwives altogether 18 pupils appeared for examination in December 1936, and all of them came out successful. The financial position of the institution is not satisfactory. During the latter half of 1935 the institution received a total sum of Rs. 8,866-4-3, which, added to the opening balance of Rs. 5,099-4-9, makes a grand total of Rs. 13,965-9-0, and the total ex-

penses for the year was Rs. 9,954-12-3. During 1936 the total receipts amounted to Rs. 23,164-0-4. This, added to the opening balance of Rs. 4,010-12-9 and Rs. 1,000 which was taken as a loan, makes a grand total of Rs. 28,174-13-1. The total expenditure came up to Rs. 23,352-10-9, thus leaving a closing balance of Rs. 4,822-2-4 of which Rs. 4,759-3-3 belongs to the Building Fund.

The importance of such a popular and up-to-date centre in a country like India where nearly 75 per cent. of the maternal and infantile deaths (no fewer than 15,70,000 babies under one year die annually in India) occur from causes which are preventible by intelligent antenatal care only, is patent even to the layman. The mead of praise the institution has won from distinguished personages, both professional and lay, provides an ample index to the efficiency and utility of the institution; but in spite of this some of the urgent needs of the institution are yet to be provided for. For a building and premises of its own and to defray the annual recurring expenses of running it, the Management of the institution looks for help from all generous sources. An amount of about 2½ lacs of rupees are required for the building and equipment, and an amount of Rs. 24,000 yearly for maintenance charges. All those who consider the cause worthy of their support may send their contributions for the purposes mentioned above either to the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sisumangal, Prathisthan, 104, Bakul Bagan Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, P.O.

#### The Ramakrishna Mission, Barisal, Report for 1936.

The germ of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideas sown as early as 1904 gradually took root, developed and finally took shape of the present Asram by 1926, and ever since it has fallen into line with other similar centres of the Mission. Among the activities of the centre the Student's Home claims notice first. In the reported year the strength of the home was 18, of which 7 were free students, 4 half-free, 5 partly paid and 2 full-paid. The Asram Library contains 780 books, consisting mostly of religious literature and some children's books. The library and reading room are freely used by the public. The boys of the Home collect donations in kind and coin from the generous public and conduct relief among the poor and the needy and nurse the diseased as far as they can. The Asram has arranged for the treatment of eye diseases in a very small scale. In the reported year the centenary celebration formed a unique item of the activity of this centre.

#### The Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamala Tal., Report for 1936.

In the Sevashram 4,438 cases, including repeated cases were treated in total. All the three systems of treatment, Allopathic, Homœopathic and Ayurvedic, are followed. The Sevashram badly suffers from want of funds. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary. The Ramakrishna Sevashram, Shyamala Tal, Sukhi-dhang, P.O., Via Tanakpur, Almora, U.P.





Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

नेत्रहीनो यथा हेक्कः कृच्छ्राणि लभतेऽध्वनि । ज्ञानहीनः तथा लोके तस्मात् ज्ञानविदोधिकाः ॥

वाग्देहमनसां शौचं क्षमा सत्यं धृतिः स्मृतिः । सर्वधर्मेषु धर्मज्ञा ज्ञापयन्ति गुणान् शुभान् ॥

यदिदं ब्रह्मणो रूपं ब्रह्मचर्यमिति स्मृतं । परं तत् सर्वं धर्मभ्यस्तेन यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

लिङ्गसंयोगहीनं यत् शब्दस्पर्शविवर्जितं । श्रोत्रेण श्रवणं चैव चक्षुषा चैव दर्शनम् ॥

वाक्संभाषाप्रवृत्तं यत् तन्मनः परिवर्जितं । बुद्ध्या चाध्यवसीयीत ब्रह्मचर्यमकल्मषम् ।

न स्मरेन्न प्रयुञ्जीत ज्ञानी तत्कर्म बुद्धिमान् । रजस्तमश्च हित्वेह न तिर्यग्गतिं मप्नुयात् ॥

तरुणाधिगतं ज्ञानं जरादुर्वलतां गतं । विषयवबुद्धिः कालेन आदत्ते मानसं बलम् ॥

A blind man wending his way alone, without anyone to guide, falls into many troubles on the road. So too an ignorant man's way in the world is beset with hindrances. Those possessed of learning and wisdom are therefore esteemed high. Purity of speech, of mind and of body ; forgiveness, truth, firmness and intelligence—these good qualities are shown to be superior virtues by pious persons. That which is called *Brahmacharya* (continence) is the royal road to the attainment of *Brahman*. It surpasses all other spiritual disciplines ; it leads to the supreme goal. One should determine, with a firm resolve, to practise taintless *Brahmacharya*, withdrawing the mind totally from all amorous talk, sight, touch, and more so from any sex contact. A wise and intelligent man should never perpetrate or even think of that act. Thus, weaning himself from passion and darkness, he shall never sink into animality. The learning acquired in youth becomes indistinct in its impression on the mind with the advance of age ; but wisdom that has become mature sustains one's strength of character even in the long run.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 216.

## GOD or MAN ? ; GOD *and* MAN ; AND GOD *in* MAN

[The following paragraphs deal with one of the burning problems of the day—the conflict between the interests of the individual and of society.]

### I

**E**VERY form of social philosophy may ultimately be analysed into a quest after a proper adjustment of the relation between individual and society. The individual is like a plant flourishing in the soil of society. All that he is, he owes to nourishment he draws from his social environment, and the advancement of his physical comforts, his intellectual attainments, his aesthetic refinement, in fact all that contributes towards what is called the 'good life' ultimately depends upon the flourishing state of the society as a whole. It would therefore seem that his supreme duty consists in the whole-hearted surrender of his self to society, and working heart and soul for its welfare. As for reward, he ought not to expect anything more than the thrill and the satisfaction derived from the opportunity of service. If there is to be any individual gratification at all, it ought to consist only in whatever he gets incidentally out of the amenities he helps to create for the collectivity.

However appealing such an idea might be to our intellect, every one feels in his heart of hearts that there is something unique even in his particularity. He is not simply a cog in the social machine, but a centre of intelligence, feelings and volitions, with a sense of the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the ugly and the beautiful. He is too much of a self-conscious entity to be reduced to mere mechanical subservience. In spite of his dependence on society, in

spite of the all-important function of society as the conservator of all cultural values, the individual feels that he is an end in himself. To equate the significance of his life with his contribution to the social welfare goes against something fundamental in his way of thought. If he once comes to know that those in whose hands the guidance of his life lies, look upon him in such a light, he feels himself reduced to the position of a slave—of one exploited to serve the purposes of others. In his domestic relations, in his daily work, and in his political and social functions, he may be serving the collectivity, but without an element of self-satisfaction, either of the narrow or of the disinterested kind, it will be impossible for him to play his part well.

As a result of the varying emphasis laid on these two ways of evaluating the human being, different views or philosophies of life have developed. It is to these that we refer by the threefold heading—God or Man ? ; God and Man ; and God *in* Man. We shall now consider the implications of each of these.

### II

The philosophy of 'God or Man ?' indicates the contrast between pure asceticism and pure humanitarianism, both of which are born of a lopsided emphasis on one or the other of the two principles mentioned before—individualism and collectivism. The pure ascetic is one who sees nothing but corruption in society. To his eyes man appears to

be a creature wallowing in sin, and any improvement of his ethical and spiritual standard on a collective scale is an impossibility. His is a microscopic view which always sees the details, and seldom the wholeness of things. As a consequence he fails to perceive the higher social values that have been created by a painful process of evolution, but magnifies all the dark spots of human nature and society, which, no doubt, are too many. He feels convinced that nothing great can be achieved in so corrupt an environment as the human society.

Side by side he feels within the urge of a higher ideal. If society is unredeemable, the individual is not however so. He may have a hundred shortcomings, but these can be checked and even eradicated, and thus he may prepare himself for a higher life, which may be realised, if not in this world, at least in a world to come. But all these higher developments are impossible so long as one is in contact with society in any form. Hence in several countries and several periods of history, especially when the moral standards of societies are at a very low ebb, we find large numbers of men drifting away from society into forests and deserts to find that environment for higher development, which they could not get in the societies they were born in. They are men endowed with a high sense of the uniqueness of the individual. But unlike in the case of most of our modern individualists, their individualistic outlook is not, however, motivated by any desire for indulgence in selfish pleasures, or for exploiting others for one's private gain. They seek solace in the individual only due to their faith in, and aspira-

tion to realise, their spiritual possibilities.

As opposed to asceticism, with its emphasis on the individual and with its tendency to shun society, is humanism and its extreme development, collectivism, which tend to submerge the individual in society, and to discourage in him any sense of his own uniqueness. According to the humanistic world view, the individual in his intelligence, activities and affections, is the creature and organ of the race to which he belongs. All he has, including moral qualities, is a social heritage. Thus the very tissues of his life are woven for him by the collective activities of the race. Apart from the society the individual is a mere abstraction having no reality. The God that man has been worshipping is only the image of society wrongly interpreted as a transcendent being due to the superstition of a pre-scientific age. Thinkers of this persuasion would therefore ask men to shake off their allegiance to theological fictions, and direct the same to society. In the service of society, country, race or humanity, the individual is to seek fulfilment. Comte, the celebrated positivistic thinker of France, therefore, raised this theory to the dignity of a religious cult, and placed the image of humanity in the niche vacated by God. This doctrine, which formed only a philosophical theory a century back, has, however, been reduced to a type of political conception of the State as a collective man. The vision of it, which is inspiring the imagination of millions in different parts of the modern world is nothing but the apotheosis of society with one difference. In place of having man as such as the object of adoration, the new

conception of State limits its attention to the race or the nation. But the renunciation demanded of the individual is complete. The collectivistic ideal of the State can be reached only when the distinction between private and public is completely obliterated, and the individual is taught to accept unquestioningly that the purpose of his existence is to be equated with his function in the collective life of the State. He must become an unquestioning tool of the State, brought up, educated and nourished by the State, only to be used exclusively for its purposes according to the discretion of its Pope, the Dictator.

No doubt there is very great difference in the implications of collectivism in its application to humanism and to nationalism, but then there is one point in which these implications are identical. To the question "God or Man?", they unanimously answer 'Man'. Their ultimate consequence is therefore bound to be the banning of every form of spiritual worldview in order that man may concentrate himself exclusively on society. If they tolerate religion at all, they can tolerate only a cult which preaches a national God, and not one who is a God of truth—He who is the common father and mother of all. For what collectivism wants to do is to create a mentality quite opposed to the ascetic type which leads to the neglect of social values in the hope of conserving individual values, which encourages man to shun society in order to save the soul.

### III

Religions all the world over attempt to bridge the gulf that separates society-shunning asceticism and society-adoring collectivism. But

they generally proceed to do this from a wrong point of view. Most of the religions are generally dualistic and even deistic in their outlook. They make a hard and fast distinction between Nature and Super-Nature, between matter and spirit, between man and God. When such an absolute distinction, implicit in every form of dualism, is maintained, it is logically impossible to avoid purely ascetic ethics. For if the world is 'other than God,' something completely contradictory to Him in substance and properties, the natural consequence would be an ethics according to which a life of dedication to God would mean one of complete severance from the world, especially from society. And that is asceticism pure and simple.

Religions, however, get over this difficulty by the philosophy of 'God and Man', the 'and' signifying the very loose manner in which they relate the two terms. It is not that religions of this type do not inculcate the virtue of service. In fact some of them do actually inspire their followers with a high ideal of service. But what distinguishes them is that even in their highest flights they cannot overcome the dualism of God and man, or the natural and the supernatural, and as a consequence, they have to keep the worship of God and the service of man as two distinct categories. Why should one love one's fellow beings? Because it is pleasing to God. God has given this duty of service to men as a command to be obeyed by the pious, and He is pleased with those who obey it. Religious life proper is something quite apart from it, and consists in prayers, communion, etc., and service of society is connected with it only indirectly, the connection arising from

the fact that it is a commandment of God.

Christianity is one of the most conspicuous examples of this kind. No one can deny that Christianity, in the past few centuries at least, has been responsible for works of service on a large scale in different parts of the world. There has no doubt been a mixture of motives in institutionalised charities, and an exaggerated importance laid on the number of converts gained, has very often contaminated the quality and spirit of the service rendered. In spite of this, however, it has to be admitted ungrudgingly that a true Christian very well understands the importance of service. But Christianity itself has provided no explanation of its famous dictum, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." except it be the crude one that God has commanded man to do so. That is why the very same gospel of Christ, which its modern interpreters represent to be the fountain-head of all true and healthy social relationship, served as the prime incentive to the hermits of early Christianity to migrate in their hundreds to inaccessible deserts and wildernesses in the belief that life in society is something antagonistic to the true spiritual interests of man. Many a modern Christian thinker would disclaim such manifestations of asceticism as an aberration resulting from the contamination of hated 'oriental' ideals, but these worthy gentlemen have to answer the pointed question whether their worldview maintains an absolute distinction between Nature and Super-Nature, between God and Man. If it is in the affirmative—and Christian Theology has always answered it in the affirmative—then the old ascetics were right, and their critics are wrong.

For in an absolute philosophical dualism of the Christian type, an ethical dictum like "Love thy neighbour as thyself" can at best inspire only service of a passive type, and not of a dynamic quality. Christian philosophy and Christian ethics seem to contradict themselves, and the special developments of the latter have therefore to be traced to influences other than its philosophical soil.

It would be seen from what we have said before that the doctrine of "God and Man" is an attempt, imperfect though it be, to reconcile the individual's sense of his uniqueness, with the claims of society on him.

#### IV

If any doctrine can adequately reconcile the claims of the spiritual and the social, of individualism and collectivism, it is the Vedantic gospel of Divine immanence, to which we refer as the philosophy of 'God in man'. It is curious that Vedanta has been criticised by Christian thinkers as an other-worldly gospel discouraging every form of active social life, or as pantheistic philosophy devoid of dynamic moral fervour. And yet it is Vedanta that has upheld from time immemorial the doctrine of Divine immanence, in the light of which alone the modern man can build a cultural edifice, which while rising to the level of spiritual transcendence, maintains its firm basis in a vigorous social life.

Unity of existence in one form or other is the cardinal principle of Vedanta. God and Man, the world and the spirit, Nature and Super-Nature are not entities that stand in isolation due to differences in their essence. There are regions of thought in which the differences between these gradually shade off into each other,



so much so God can be worshipped both in transcendence and immanence. To the thoroughgoing monist He is the only real existence, and the world of multiplicity is only an apparent manifestation of His. As the real substratum of the world, He is immanent in it. Thus the whole world, both in its higher and lower aspects, reveals and symbolises the Supreme Being. Though God is thus present, as the underlying substratum, in every aspect of Nature, those that are sublime and pure in their appeal reveal His essence better than others. For it is the nearness of the symbol or manifestation to Him that accounts for its power to stimulate the higher nature in us. Until a person's spiritual insight is fully developed, and he is able to see the spiritual substratum everywhere and in everything, this perception of difference in the value of manifestation is bound to persist.

Even in the case of those Vedantists who do not accept a thoroughgoing theory of monism, the doctrine of immanence holds good. They may not agree to the idea that the world-process is not real in an absolute sense, or to the doctrine that the purified self of the individual is identical with the Universal Self. Yet they lay as much emphasis as the other Vedantists on the theory of the immanence of God, and maintain that though God is the master of Nature, yet He is present in every form of Nature's manifestation. They may maintain an absolute distinction in entity between God and soul, yet they grant that God dwells in every soul as the soul of all souls. Hence in spite of the dualistic strain of thought, those systems of Vedanta also maintain that the world symbolises the Deity. For

if He is present everywhere in the manifested phenomena of this world, it is natural that for a man who accepts this idea they become symbols revealing His presence to a lesser or greater extent according to their refinement and capacity to suggest a sense of the Divinity.

The importance of this doctrine in reconciling man's spiritual sense of a uniqueness to be realised through his particularity, with the demand of society that he should live entirely for it, will be quite obvious. For according to the doctrine of immanence, although God is much more than the world, He is not an extra-cosmic being who is to be propitiated by prayers or won over by offerings, but a Presence that is to be felt in all the experiences of life. Worship here changes from prayer into communion. For prayer implies petitioning, which is essentially associated with an extra-cosmic God, whereas communion is more an attitude of mind than an activity. Not that in communion, forms of worship like prayer, offerings, etc., have no place. What it insists is that these are to be valued only in so far as they help one to have that attitude of mind characteristic of communion—the attitude which perceives the presence of God everywhere.

It also maintains that, since the cultivation of a proper attitude is the essence of communion, it is quite arbitrary, and inconsistent with the doctrine of immanence, to posit any absolute distinction between the secular and the sacred, or between work and worship. In fact what is called divine communion has two expressions—the inward and the outward. The inward expression of it is what passes ordinarily under the name of spiritual disciplines with graded men-

tal exercises consisting of rituals, invocations, prayers, sacraments, meditation, analysis of one's mental workings—in fact of all the methods devised by man to bring about an awareness of the Divinity lodged in his self through introspection. The external form of communion is an attempt to evoke in one's mind a sense of the same immanent Presence, but it is done not so much through a shutting off of the senses from external contacts as in inner communion, as through a participation in the activities of life with a particular attitude of mind. This attitude consists in looking upon society as a manifestation of the Supreme, and accordingly discharging all one's duties towards it in a spirit of worship. If God is immanent in oneself, He is immanent in others as well. Society, which is a collection of individuals, may therefore be taken as the highest expression of the Divine in this manifested world. The various types of work necessary for its up-keep and prosperity may appear purely secular to a mind that does not understand the philosophy of immanence, but to one who has really grasped its essential principle, any work of social utility becomes an act of worship of God and direct communion with him. In fact for him the difference between work and worship, between the secular and the sacred, disappears, and both these apparently contradictory forms of activities become mutually complementary as the introspective and the active forms of communion. The whole of life becomes divinised. It is this synthesis of life and metaphysics that forms so unique a feature of the Bhagavad Gita.

Now what is the importance of this philosophy, which we would call the 'Philosophy of God in Man' in reconciling individualism with collectivism. Individualism has been responsible for much evil, and has received the hearty condemnation of moralists of to-day as well as of the past. But yet it survives and it would survive as long as there is humanity, because it stands for man as a sign-post of one line of development. There is really a uniqueness in individuality, and the culture of this uniqueness in its true cosmic significance is the essence of spiritual life. On the other hand when we try to be unique in our isolation, that is, in disregard of our right relationship with the totality of existence, then we become self-centred, and we degenerate into pure materiality. Thus the sense of individuality, which represents the principle of conservation of moral values in man, is responsible both for the degradation as well as elevation of man in the spiritual scale. It may be that in the state of spiritual perfection individuality as we understand it is transcended in a sense of unity with the Cosmic Spirit, but this transcendence is not to be achieved by a premature suppression of individuality in the interest of any collectivistic or humanistic gospel that disregards the transcendental and super-social significance of the human individual. Nor can any society or nation tolerate, without grave peril to its own status in the world, the unhealthy spiritual individualism which expresses itself as extravagant asceticism that shuns and scorns society as an unmitigated evil. But in the light of the doctrine of immanence, otherwise described here as

the philosophy of 'God in Man,' we can have an ideal of life that takes due cognisance of the spiritual urge of introversion that manifests itself as asceticism, as well as of the ethical urge of extroversion that takes the form of humanism and collectivism, —an ideal that in fact fuses or synthesises both these into a rational and

harmonious scheme of spiritual life with its twin forms of communion, namely meditation, in which one communes with the Deity immanent in the self, and service, through which one communes with the same Deity as manifested in others and in society at large.

## REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

*By P. Manikkaswami Mudaliar, B.A.*

[Swami Ramakrishnananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the pioneer of the Ramakrishna movement in South India. His birthday anniversary falls on the 4th of August, and we hope that in connection with this occasion, it would interest our readers to peruse these reminiscences about him by Mr. P. Manikkaswami Mudaliar who is a close student and follower of the Swami.]

### I

**D**URING the last decade of the 19th century and the opening of the 20th century, one of the most prominent persons in the sphere of religious activity in Madras was Swami Ramakrishnananda. He was the founder of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras and one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was sent to Madras by Swami Vivekananda to spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna and to found a Math here. The birthday anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda falls on the 4th of August, and it would not be inappropriate to bring into our recollection a few inspiring incidents of his life, and ponder over them.

### II

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, his Sannyasin disciples were all gathered together in the Baranagore Math by Swami Vivekananda. Soon after, these disciples began to leave the Math one after another, some for pilgrimage and

some for Tapasya, except Swami Ramakrishnananda who stuck to it, having taken upon himself the duty of performing daily Pooja to Sri Ramakrishna. It was Swami Ramakrishnananda's notion, nay realisation, that though Sri Ramakrishna had disappeared in body, he was yet present and living in their midst. For seven long years the Swami confined himself to the precincts of the Math, and did not go even to Calcutta but spent all his time in Pooja, meditation and reading scriptures. Besides, he was looking after the physical comforts of such of his co-disciples as happened to stay with him, and was thus the main prop and pillar of the Math.

When, on his first return from America, Swami Vivekananda was proceeding on his triumphal tour from Colombo to Almora, the citizens of Madras approached him and requested him to send them a Sadhu who could minister to their spiritual needs. Accordingly he sent Swami Ramakrishnananda, as he thought

that his orthodoxy entitled him best to work among Madrasis, who are proverbially known for their orthodoxy. Swami Ramakrishnananda came here in 1896 and was accommodated in the house now situated east of Lady Wellington's Training College for Women, and then known as Ice-house.

### III

Within a short time of his arrival, Swami Ramakrishnananda started religious classes in different parts of Madras, which attracted in large numbers the school and college-going population, as also the intelligentsia from the middle and upper classes. I had the good fortune of attending a few of those classes and getting a good grounding in the philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya. I also underwent a thorough change in my outlook of life, for which I am deeply indebted to the Swami. Though, as a result of the Swami's teaching, few were able to renounce the world, and take to the life of Sannyas, it cannot be gainsaid that not a few imbibed a desire for renunciation which unfliningly had its reaction and salutary effect on their daily conduct in life.

After the class hour the Swami used to invite questions. I readily availed myself of the opportunity not so much for enlightening myself as to enlighten the Swami, as my youthful conceitedness would have it. I took pleasure in plaguing him with all sorts of questions and quick repartees. Not a few occasions there were when the Swamiji was cornered, and could not, as I thought, find his way out. One day with a strong backing of my agnostic and sceptical friends whom I took with me, I went on putting him question after question, the chief of

which was, "How could the unperturbed Brahman become ever perturbed." The answer given was so unintelligible that I exulted in having made his position untenable, which exultation made the Swami come down on me with the words: "What do you know? You simply blabber without in the least knowing what you are talking about." These words, though uttered in angry tone, proved to be of saving grace to me. I felt they came like a thunderbolt and were just sufficient to bring me to a sense of seriousness. The irreverent attitude disappeared, and somehow a feeling of reverence coursed through my body, and I instantly reined my tongue and became silent.

A day or two after this incident, I was impelled to run up to the Math. I expected a very cold reception; but lo! I was struck with the love and cordiality with which the Swami received me. I took courage and resumed the topic about which we had a difference of opinion, and in the heart-to-heart talk which ensued, there was such a mutual exchange of views that it had the effect of laying bare the hollowness of my position and the profundity of the Swamiji's view point. From that day onwards, need I say, I became his humble follower and a passive listener ever ready to drink in the nectar-like words which fell from his lips. I lost no opportunity of coming in close contact with him, and the illumination I derived from such contact, being one of feeling, can hardly be described in words. I placed at the disposal of the Swamiji all my resources—mental, bodily and financial—which the Swami was gracious enough to utilise whenever needed.

## IV

In discoursing on religion, Swami Ramakrishnananda eschewed all metaphysical and philosophical technicalities, and had the power of clothing most abstruse ideas in simple language quite understandable to even ordinary lay minds. His one aim seemed to be to wean the English educated young men from their habitual leaning to the materialistic Western culture, and to make them recognise, appreciate and follow the nuggets of golden truths embedded in Hindu Scriptures. He would not tolerate disparaging remarks regarding Manu, Vyasa and such other saints and sages of India, but would hold a brief for all traditions, customs and usages, round which the Hindu civilisation has grown.

He invariably taught his students Vedanta as expounded by Sankara. He would exhort his students to apply three tests before accepting any truth. It must be supported by (1) scripture (Sruti), (2) reasoning (Yukti) and (3) experience (Anubhava). Of these three tests, he would accord the highest rank to reason. When any truth happens to have the support either of scripture or of experience or of both, but not of reason, he would advise his students to defer their verdict until they could get better and clearer light from scholars more learned, or from men of acknowledged spiritual greatness. He would take his students step by step through rational grounds to the dizzy heights of the monistic conception of Consciousness (Samvid, as he would term it) pure and simple, where there is neither the notion of God as the creator, preserver and destroyer, nor the conception of the knower and the known.

By subtle and elaborate arguments he would establish that man is not this body,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cubits in length, nor the mind, but that he is infinite in his real nature. He is Reality itself—Reality which is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute. The Swami would not, however, like to leave the student immersed intellectually in this abstruse thought, but would suddenly turn his attention to the standpoint of a Bhakta who considers himself to be an insignificant entity and surrenders himself to God, who for him is all in all. Such a sudden turn in the view point was beyond the comprehension of students of ordinary calibre who would accuse him of blowing hot and cold in the same breath. Such a sudden change of view was possible for men of Swami Ramakrishnananda's type only. For by his close contact with his Guru Sri Ramakrishna, he had acquired such a clear knowledge of Gnana and Bhakti that he was able easily to jump from the one to the other without losing hold of the common ground. Some would say that he did so because he himself was a Bhakta and would cite the fervour and devotion with which he offered worship to his Guru, in support of their opinion. While it cannot be denied that he had unparalleled devotion for Sri Ramakrishna, his Guru—as every Gaudi has to his spiritual teacher—it should also be borne in mind that in the books he has written and published, the monistic idea comes out more prominently, and that it was this idea also that he generally taught in his classes. Once when I approached him for practical instruction for meditation, he told me, "Think of the vastness of the universe." From these facts I have been,

and am still of opinion, that Swami Ramakrishnananda was a monist and Gnani in his heart of hearts, and that his love for, and worship of, the Guru could not be considered as sufficient ground for putting him under the category of Bhaktas. At best I can take him both as Gnani and a Bhakta—a combination rare to find in one individual.

## V

The Swami, being a Sannyasi, naturally emphasised in his teachings on renunciation and service, but this did not appeal to the public of Madras who were accustomed to hear Puranic and other stories from Pandits. Whether on account of this or for any other reason, the Swami's classes grew thinner and thinner and had to be closed ultimately. A few of the students attending these classes began to repair to the Math and benefit by his teachings. Their love and attachment for the Swami grew intensely and they stuck to him through thick and thin. They kept themselves ever ready for service of any kind in all ways possible. Regarding the dwindling of attendance in his classes, the Swami would wittily remark, "Religion is like *Sakkarapongal*" (a kind of sweet dish), meaning thereby that the mental condition of the people was too weak to take to the study of religion proper, much less to practise spiritual life which needed great control of senses.

## VI

The Swami's solicitude for his students was remarkable. He would keep watch and ward over their habits, manners and conduct in life. The Swami wished that his students, most of whom were poor, should live more comfortably and enjoy the ordi-

nary amenities of life. He would rather suffer than put his students to any expenditure which their meagre purse could not permit. Once a student who had a lift in his office came forward to help the Math with a small monthly subscription, but the Swamiji who knew his position was very reluctant to accept it.

If the Swami should find a student sitting with his chin resting on his palm he would at once direct him to change his posture as it indicated a pensive mood to which a religious aspirant should not give room. If he should find a student gently shaking his legs ceaselessly when seated on a chair or bench, he would immediately ask him to stop it, as it would cause restlessness of mind. If he should see a student drinking water standing, he would forthwith advise him to sit and drink, as otherwise it is likely to cause a local disturbance in the body resulting in ill-health.

On one occasion a poor student of his offered a donation of Rs. 15, and when he learned that it was got by joining a lottery, he admonished him severely saying that money got by the sweat of one's brow alone was helpful for spiritual advancement.

There used to go to the Swami a student whom he loved very much for his simplicity, frankness and unostentatiousness. But this student did not know how to serve and show respect to his teacher. With a view to removing this defect in him, he one day called him near and said, "Well, you shampoo my leg a little." Need it be said that he did as directed in the right attitude of mind, at which the Swami was much pleased. On another day when the Swamiji was lying down slightly indisposed, and a junior

Swami was fanning him, he saw the same student entering the Math. At this the Swami said something to the junior Swami (the student heard only the word 'Susrusha' which means service) who gave up fanning and went away. The Swami, as if to bestow grace on the student, asked him to press his body as well as he could. Such was his solicitude, his magnanimity and overflowing kindness.

## VII

There were days when the Swami had to manage the Math without any body to help him—not even a servant to do the cooking. On one such day, as the Swami returned from his class in the evening, he espied a stranger sitting at the threshold of the Math. On inquiry he found that this man somehow fell in the company of, itinerant class of beggars known as Bairagis, and that, their treatment being intolerable, he managed to run away from them to seek the Swami's protection. The Swami, out of his bene-

volent heart, gave him shelter, and in a few days thereafter admitted him as an inmate of the Math. This man, in whom the truant tendency still lingered, decamped one day without the knowledge and permission of the Swami. When after some days he returned and repented of his conduct, the Swami forgave him and readmitted him. It would be surprising to learn that this man, under the burning spiritual influence of the Swami, got all his previous tendencies changed and became so pure as to be ultimately admitted as a member of the monastic Order.

## VIII

Space forbids further enumeration of the inspiring and instructive incidents with which the Swami's life is replete. Suffice it to say that the void created by his passing away in the year 1911 still continues to be a void. For the company of such exalted spiritual personages is rarely to be had.

# THE SPIRITUAL PATH

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'The Universal Prayers' and 'The Divine Life,' is the representative of the Ramakrishna Order preaching the gospel of Vedanta in the continent of Europe. The Swami was formerly the Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, and the Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*. In this article forming the substance of some of his class talks in Europe, the Swami gives many a practical suggestion to spiritual aspirants.]

## BEGIN EARLY

ONE has to begin as early as possible with one's spiritual life. Unless we have sown the seed of spirituality in our soul early in life, there is no possibility of creating the spiritual mood in later life. Those who are not spiritually minded while they live in the world, can never be spiritually minded when

they retire from the world. They will find that the old impure impressions have become so deep that there is no possibility of effacing them, that they have become the slaves of their instincts and impulses, and that they can no longer act in the way they would like to, cannot take up a higher and purer life, neither mentally nor physically. Our ideal is to make a

beginning of liberation in this very life and to make the best use of the time that is given to us.

#### THE LORD'S GRACE

The Grace of the Divine comes to a person in the form of self-effort, in the form of the will to strive for something higher and more permanent than all these phenomena. Some speak of destiny, others speak of self-effort, while again others hold, "Yes, it is true that everything depends on the will of the Lord, but the Lord desires that I should strive my utmost. Self-effort comes to me as a manifestation of my 'destiny'; it is the will of the Lord that creates in me the desire for striving". But without purity and real, unfeigned dispassion there can never be any spiritual life, or even any deep spiritual striving. Unless we strive our very utmost and our best, the Lord's Grace will not descend on us.

#### CONTROL THE MIND

What is most essential in all forms of spiritual life is to keep the greater part of the mind thinking of God, thinking of the Ideal, and never to allow it to give its thoughts entirely to the world or worldly affections and relations even when occupied with some worldly duty. We must know how to divide the mind to some extent, so that we can make one part of it cling to the Lord and to the Lord alone, whatever be our occupation. Through constant practice, through unflagging practice, we may develop an attitude of mind that enables us to think and to feel that whatever we do is a service to the Lord, and that we have no right to the fruits of any of our actions. "O Lord, whatever works I do, I look upon it as a form of worship to Thee." This

service may be physical, intellectual or spiritual.

Watch the reactions in your mind brought about by certain people and things, and act accordingly. Avoid everything that is apt to rouse old, evil impressions and thoughts belonging to your former life. We cannot allow ourselves to run after worldly love and affections and have the higher Divine Love at the same time. God and worldly affections cannot live together.

#### DEFINITE IDEA OF THE PATH AND THE GOAL

We should have the ideal fixed that neither worldly nor heavenly pleasures are our goal, that our ultimate goal is Self-realisation—neither this world nor heaven, nor any other world. Heavenly enjoyment is no better than earthly enjoyment, and so long as there is hankering after heavenly enjoyment, we can never attain the goal. We must yearn for God more than for His creation either in heaven or in earth.

Before we actually begin our spiritual life in real earnest, we must decide if we are really fully prepared to pay the price. We must fix once for all our ideal, our conduct of life, and everything, and then stick to it in all circumstances. If we wish to transcend all the unrealities, there must always be a certain amount of dare-devil in us, a certain amount of fearlessness and true heroism. Unless we are prepared to sacrifice all our worldly desires and our sense of 'I-ness', we can never hope to realise the higher ideal. "Give us discrimination, give us renunciation, give us devotion and knowledge"—let us pray thus to the Divine.



## DISCRIMINATION

You must never associate too freely with people and must always use discrimination. If another person attracts you, just direct the mind into some higher channels, create in yourself some dislike or disgust for the person in question, so that that person loses all charm for you. Later on this disgust is to be effaced so that you can look at that person with the same indifference with which you would look at a stranger you have never known. In spiritual life, although to a great extent you cut off your personal relations with others, you come to have a wider love and sympathy for them through the medium of the Divine. When one finds something higher, the lower ideal automatically loses its attraction, and is put aside.

We should also practise a certain amount of control and discrimination regarding the food we take. And so long as we are in the body, the body must be properly taken care of and nourished to keep it a fit instrument for realisation of the Divine and for the Divine's work. There is much more body-consciousness in the person who is ill or weak than in the perfectly healthy and normal person. We have to see that our body-consciousness is reduced to a minimum if we want to make good progress in spiritual life.

Unless our mind be to some extent pure and non-attached and prepared for renunciation, we can never even think of God-realisation. Try to purify your heart, to purify your mind, as much as possible. Then the blazing fire of spiritual realisation will burn away all desires.

## MEDITATION ON THE HOLY

## PERSONALITIES

Few people can begin their spiritual practice with the meditation on the Formless and Attributeless Aspect of the Divine. Even the conception of God without form but with attributes is beyond the grasp of the many. So long as it is impossible for us to form even an idea of the Divine in both His transcendent and immanent aspects, we should first of all try to think of the Divine Glory as manifest through the Holy Personalities—the great Incarnations and Prophets of mankind. It is very easy for us to speak of worshipping God in truth and in spirit. But since, as a matter of fact, we cannot do so, it becomes a meaningless phrase and nothing more.

We think in terms of our small, limited, impure, individual consciousness, but the great ones think in terms of the Infinite Consciousness. We are like small, tiny, self-forgotten bubbles, while they are like mountain-high waves that are always conscious of their ocean-origin. The ocean never comes to be limited by the wave-form.

The Incarnation is a glorious manifestation, but never the whole, of God who is the reality at the back of ordinary beings also.

Tiny bubbles that we are, we find it difficult to understand even a full wave-consciousness. By worshipping and meditating on the great ones, we are able to come in touch with their super-consciousness. This breaks the bonds of our limited existence and brings in a new light, a deeper awareness that lies hidden in the depths of our being. The waves

bring us in contact with the ocean. By lifting ourselves consciously to the plane of their knowledge, we get rid of all our false notions, of our being identified with the body, of being men and women. Dropping the limiting adjuncts, we get a new and purer sense of existence — a universal consciousness that gives the true meaning to our individual existence and life.

#### INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL

In trying to separate itself from the ocean, the bubble runs the risk of bursting its bubble-form, as it can never exist without the contact of the ocean. But the trouble is that we are not conscious of this great fact. We consider ourselves to be separate entities, separate from the ocean and separate from one another. When this initial mistake is made through ignorance, all other mistakes follow as a matter of course and make our life one of endless misery.

Although we may take our limited existence to be absolutely real at first, we find, on deeper consideration and experience, that it is not so. The false conception of reality is wholly due to ignorance. It is through this that we come to cherish many a petty and ignoble idea, and we suffer because of that. However, by getting rid of the false conceptions, we rise above all illusory, limiting adjuncts, and regain our true nature, the true dignity and glory of the Divine in us, who is not only our *self* but is the *self* of all.

#### HINTS FOR MEDITATION

In the beginning of our spiritual life we have to create our own images, but these must be images of which the pattern is right, *i.e.*, imaginations of something that is real, not of

something wholly imaginary. Some stress the sense of the Presence more than the form, although they, too, may call up the form. The same Being permeates both the form called up and the devotee, as It is the devotee's own eternal Being — his true *self*.

Just think that your whole heart or head is permeated with the Divine Effulgence, and that this Light is part of the Infinite Light that pervades everything. Melt away your whole personality, your I-ness, into That. Melt away your body, your mind, your senses, your emotions, into That. Just imagine this very vividly. And then this infinite ocean of Light takes shape as part of this Light becomes solidified in the form of your Ishtam (Chosen Deity), but never lose sight of the infinite background of which your Ishtam and you yourself as well as all others are parts, and which permeates all these. The ocean, the One Eternal Principle, lying at the back of both yourself and the whole universe, must never be lost sight of, because it is That which is to be fully realised by you one day.

But one who does not lead a pure life and is not disciplined ought not to follow this instruction, because meditation becomes dangerous in the case of a person who is not properly prepared and has not gone through the proper preliminary training.

#### SELF-SURRENDER

Only one who has really passed through strenuous self-effort can give himself up and surrender himself wholly and unconditionally at the feet of the Divine. All forms of striving make the mind pure and fit for the Divine touch. And self-surrender can

only be accomplished after having gone through one's spiritual practice with great perseverance and doggedness. Self-surrender can only come when our wings are dead tired like those of the bird sitting on the ship's mast after having tried in vain to reach land when the ship was on high sea.

Too much activity is very dangerous, because it usually becomes like the aimless activity of the monkey. This kind of activity is just restlessness, and we see it in people who are terribly afraid to be left to themselves. But on the other side you find a form of so-called self-surrender that is nothing more than inertness, indolence, lethargy. And this is just as bad as aimless activity. The true aspirant should always try to combine both—activity of the right kind and self-surrender.

#### STUDY AND PRACTICE

Religion is something different from, and something more than, book-knowledge. Through mere scholarship, through mere intellectual study, you can never learn the Truth. When we think too much and too highly of intellectual life, we can never realise the essential truths of religion.

"Let one study as well as he can, master the subjects, but after having become a great scholar, let him renounce desires and try to live upon the strength which comes from knowledge."

One must be free from all guile, from all falsehood, all lack of uprightness, from all the perversities of the mind, and then become a man of meditation, if one wants to make real spiritual progress.

Having known the essentials of spiritual life, having formed a clear

idea of the Divine, you should try to practise the disciplines. Do not read too many empty words. That creates only disturbance and trouble. Now, this does not mean that you should not go in for studies, but you should make it a point to study with a view to realise the Truth, and along with your studies there must be some real spiritual practice every day. You must always train your intellect and have your fixed studies, think deeply on the problems, and form a habit of clear thinking and deep study, so that you would feel uncomfortable the day that you have not studied anything deeply pondering over it and over the truths it contains. This daily study is to be made an important item of your spiritual practice.

#### LUST AND GREED

Sri Ramakrishna's message is: "Be spiritual and realise the Truth yourself." By living the spiritual life, we can make the Divine living in our own life. The Master shows us how we may overcome sex and greed—these, our greatest obstacles on the path of all spiritual progress. He wishes us to have a new outlook towards ourselves and others. Men as well as women must have the Divine outlook, and not think of themselves in terms of sex and body. To see the Divine in oneself and in all others, men and women, is the only solution for the world-problem of sex and the relation between the sexes. This is a most vital point to note for the spiritual aspirant. You can never rise above the sex-idea by just hating woman or man, as many mystics of the Middle Ages tried to do. Something more is needed. The Divine is in me, in all, in everything. "I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am the Self."

### BUDDHA'S PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

It was the mission of Buddha's life to ask people not to think too much of philosophies and metaphysics, of rites and ceremonies, but to make religion—the Spiritual Law—a living force in their own lives by leading a life of purity, meditation, spiritual discipline and mental control. What did Buddha say of God? He was silent on the point. It is not essential to speak of God so much, but far more essential to follow God's path, to live the spiritual life. What is the use of saying: "O Lord, how beautiful Thou art! How beautiful are Thy skies, Thy stars, Thy whole creation!" The Creator is always greater than His creation, and does not feel proud of it. Seen from our human standpoint, we find it great, but to God it is insignificant. So it is more important to follow God's path than to praise God eternally, without ever doing anything. This lip-service is of no use to the aspirant.

Once Buddha was asked, "Sir, is there a God?". He replied, "Did I say there is a God?" "Then is there no God, sir?" asked the questioner. "Did I say there is no God?" came the reply. Buddha wanted to stop all empty and hair-splitting discussions and speculations, and make people do something. So he said, "When a house is on fire, do you first go and trace the origin of the fire, or do you try to extinguish it?" But we in our foolishness very often try to trace the origin first, but before we have succeeded in the attempt, the whole house is burnt down and nothing remains of it but a heap of ashes.

We always want everything to be done for us by somebody else. There can be no vicarious salvation with-

out any self-effort on the part of the aspirant. Most of the so-called religious people are mere parasites in the world of religion and spiritual life. It would be better for them to take up something else.

### AVOID TEMPTATIONS

During the period of our spiritual training we must try as much as possible to avoid all temptations, both in its gross and subtle forms. We should salute anything that may become an object of temptation to us, from a safe distance. Let us not go near it. We must not rely too much on our own strength for a long time to come. We have such a dirty mind full of filthy impressions that once it is really stirred up, it may create no end of troubles. Lust, hatred, greed, vulgarity, all these are lying hidden in us and waiting to make us their prey. And so we must be on our guard.

Always the trouble arises through our being too little aware of the danger in the form of a tiny and apparently insignificant ripple in the mind. The outer stimulus, even if it be a very subtle and scarcely perceptible one, gradually affects the mind. Sometimes even the memory of some old impure impression is enough to upset us, because the germ or the seed is always inside, never outside. Unless the seed be inside, it can never sprout.

Attachment in any form may be enough to muddle the brain and bring about the spiritual ruin of the aspirant, but when attachment and anger combine, the whole mind becomes chaotic, and all progress is stopped. All struggle for the Higher Life comes to an end when passion has its sway over a person. That is why we should carefully avoid any

harmful stimulus, even if it be a very subtle one, and keep our mind engaged with the higher thoughts. We should not give an opportunity to the lower propensities and impulses, and avoid as much as possible the company of persons of the other sex as well as that of those of our own sex who do not lead a strictly moral life, at least during the period of our spiritual training.

“Fill the mind with Vedantic thoughts until you fall asleep or until this body of yours drops off”

We should not give an opportunity to the passions to sway us. It is the nature of the mind to think, and if we do not give good and pure thoughts to the mind, avoiding all old impure associations, it is bound to

think of bad and impure ones. So be up and doing. Always be on your guard and follow the path intelligently and assiduously.

#### PRAYERS


O Lord, with the passing of every day the duration of life is seen to shorten, and youth to decay. The days that are gone do never come back ; time verily is the devourer of the world. Fortune is fickle and short-lived as ripples on the surface of water, while life is momentary like a flash of lightning. Therefore, O Thou Refuge of all, do Thou even now protect me who seek refuge in Thee.

May the wicked become virtuous.  
May the virtuous attain tranquillity.  
May the tranquil be free from bonds.  
May the freed make others free.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA—VIVEKANANDA

*By Nikolai Kazanzakis*

[Sjt. Dilip Kumar Roy of Sri Aurobindo Asram, to whose kind courtesy we owe this translation from Greek, writes : “This is the translation of a preface written by Nikolai Kazanzakis, to a book in Greek to be shortly published by Mlle. Eleni Samios, the author of *La Sainte Vie de Mahatma Gandhi*.” This book is a collection of Swami Vivekananda’s lectures and other writings translated from English into Greek. ‘Nikolai Kazanzakis,’ tells me my friend, Monsieur Jean Herbert of the League of Nations, ‘is a great writer, poet and philosopher, and the author of a monumental epic poem in which he has striven to express poetically all the philosophies of the world. He has translated into Greek, Dante, Goethe and Shakespeare, is the author of a number of philosophical novels and is an advanced Yogi.’”]

T the heart of all religions, is in travail a pan-human aspiration for the Beyond. Below the sub-soil of all rigid and fanatical dogmas which create schisms between the religions, there stirs a tremendous breath, a wind—the self-same sigh of Man, which overflows from this earth. And behind the multicoloured religious mythologies is often hidden, incomprehensibly, a Verity which is extremely simple, eternal, without

vainglorious ornaments. The lead of this aspiration, this sigh, this Verity, has shown in all times the *one* path which has carried the mystic soul to its salvation. For, it is at the end of this path that has always appeared the *one* reality to which different people and different epochs have given different names : the Idea, the ‘Thing-in-itself, Atman, God.

There was the path, and the aim was to be united with this eternal

Reality, to be one with it. But not only to be one with it, but even more, to understand that for centuries past we have been united with it. Our road was not a going forward but a return home.

India has given birth to spiritual giants such as no other country on earth has ; she has produced giants who have aspired for the Supreme Union with a glowing intensity of feeling married to a radiant intellectual luminosity. They were veritable "Bacchants of Light" — in the Hellenic acceptation of the phrase. In no other country have the "God-possessed" perceived with a similar spiritual intensity and passion that behind this series of complex phenomena there exists an Essence which is simple and immutable, that at the back of all these masks an eternal visage gazes steadfastly at the human soul with eyes that watch over and attract him like a shining beacon from behind the herbs, animals, men, ideas.

The Christian and the Mussalman mystics envisage the soul as a virgin lover who approaches more and more her supreme Beloved : the more she draws near the more she rejoices, and the more is Matter transformed into Spirit until she attains the perfect contact and enjoys the ecstasy of the supreme wedlock.

The Hindu mystic follows, often, another path. After being first persuaded by reason that there can be but one Divine Breath—the Atman—and that the human soul can but be one with this Divine Breath, each soul follows up the path along various lanes in the measure of the grace conceded to it—to return at last to its eternal birth place, that of Divinity.

The mystics of ancient Greece had followed three pathways to attain to the supreme union:

(1) God descends in man, chases away the human ego and takes possession of the body and soul.

(2) Man, through spiritual *Sadhana*, ascends to the Divine and unites with Him : he then becomes God which the Germans call 'Vergotterung' (Divinisation).

(3) God and man become one. Man does not indeed become God but he comprehends at last that he has been one with Him, in all eternity : Vergotterung.

These three paths were followed also by Gnostics, the Christian mystics and the Mussalmans. An Arab Gnostic of the second century wrote to his friend : "Do not seek God outside thy self. He is within thee. This is how thou must call to Him : 'My God, my spirit, my reason, my soul, my body'."

According to the Hindus there are four ways which lead to the supreme union : the way of Love (Bhakti Yoga), the way of Works (Karma Yoga), the way of the Intellect (Gnana Yoga) and the mystic way (Raja Yoga).

It was the way of Love that had been followed in the last century by the spiritual giant, Sri Ramakrishna of India. The human soul has rarely experienced with such a depth of intoxication the anguish and the rapture of Divine Love. Like to Maria Magdalene dei Pazzi, the mystic devotee of the Middle Ages, Sri Ramakrishna too had followed the call of the soul crying : Love ! Love ! Love !

Sri Ramakrishna aspired to invoke—to quote the great Byzantine mystic Nicolas Carassilas—"not only a ray of light but the entire disc of the sun."

That is why he did not want merely a Christian, a Mussalman, a Brahmin, or a Buddhist conversion : he aspired for the whole disc, to re-experience what Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Bhudda, Christ, Mahomed did. He would have nothing whatever intervene between his soul and God : no dogma, no myth, no idea, no idol. Nothing. Absolute nudity.

He had felt the same necessity of direct contact—the need so boldly and exquisitely expressed in the thirteenth century by Mechllilde of Magdeburg.

The Lord said to the human soul :

—“ Dame Ame, reste ”

(Virgin soul, rest)

—“ Que veux-tu que je fasse, Seigneur ? ”

—“ To unclothe Thee.”

—“ O Lord, I am ashamed ! ”

—“ Dame Ame, we are one—in so much that nothing must stand between us : neither shame, nor fear ; nay—nor virtue even.”

—“ Lord, here is my naked soul.”

\* \* \*

Only words of human love can express so completely Love Divine. For either party has the same flight, the same effervescence, finding the same obstacles and the same reactions, achieving at last the perfect contact, the great joy in victory.

Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna's disciple, followed another path to find God and revealed this way to men.

Sri Ramakrishna was a Brahmin, poor, ailing, full of tenderness. Vivekananda was a Kshatriya (the caste of warriors), his family aristocratic, rich, his body that of a robust and exacting athlete. He loved the joys of the body, did not attach an inordinate importance to spiritual austerities, was not interested in religion,—

having been weaned from it all by his western education and the so-called scientific, plebeian, materialistic ideology of the epoch.

One day, in 1880, when he was about seventeen years old, he met the man who was to revolutionise his life: Sri Ramakrishna.

He sat at the feet of his *Guru* for years, and when the *Guru* died, rose, alone to preach the gospel of his preceptor. But his way was not *Bhakti-Yoga*, the path of Love : it was *Karma-Yoga*, the path of action. Vivekananda could not reach out for the supreme union save through action. He imposed on his own life a great mission, which demanded for its realisation action, movement, travel through continents, contact with men, discussions, questions and answers—struggle.

May all men join hands and understand that all religions are the same, that all Gods are but one God. May the Orient and the Occident be brothers, making their common salvation depend on their mutual contact and their collaboration. The Occident will bring her science, her technical discoveries, the feats of the intellect which subjugates matter : the Orient will bring its spiritual glory, its researches in inner life, its marvels of abstractions. Without this collaboration of the two hemispheres humanity cannot but be in perpetual danger.

In 1893, after the death of his *Guru*, Vivekananda preached at the Congress of Religions at Chicago. His voice was warm, puissant, flaming with faith. In Europe and America he preached the unity of all the religions and stressed the need of a psychic renaissance. In India he emphasised social progress, the lights of science and the need of a certain

material comfort. For he was well aware, as had been his Master before him, that "Religion can mean little for hungry stomachs."

Vivekananda lived from his depth and loved with the same love the men of the East and the West. Sri Ramakrishna lived in God, Vivekananda—in men. Somebody had once asked a Rabbi: "How can one love God?" "By loving man," the priest had replied. It is thus by loving Man that Vivekananda attained the luminous sphere of his Master.

But Vivekananda was not merely a *Karma-Yogi*, an athlete of action. His voice was surcharged with human knowledge and intellectual accumen. He never sought to sweep his audience away into a mystic ecstasy: on the contrary, he sought to persuade them by reason, to enlighten their mind, to win them over by the strength of his dialectic to his own point of view so as to persuade them into collaborating with him in his work. Vivekananda was also a *Gnana-Yogi*, a master-mind of knowledge. He was what Maxime Homologete, the Byzantine mystic, called: "The robust Man, and the robust Man is one who welds knowledge and action into a harmony."

Sri Ramakrishna had found his salvation through love of God, through loosing himself utterly in the Divine Essence. Vivekananda found his sal-

vation through love of Man, through action among men indefatigably, full of faith and love and intellectual force.

His voice was silenced abruptly on the 4th July, 1902 by death, at the age of thirty-nine.

But his immortal message had been delivered by his mortal breath. That could not die with his last breath. It lives still—this word, luminous and ardent in thousands of souls in the East and the West—it is still potent, battling and fertilising. All that Vivekananda, the mortal, contained of the immortal—was saved. His lectures taken down by his faithful stenographer and disciple Goodwin, have become the gospel of thousands of noble and pure souls, and help our fervent aspiration for love and brotherhood, even at the heart of this horrible fratricidal war of our epoch.

Let us hope that this translation in Greek of a lecture delivered by Vivekananda in California on January 28th, 1902 will not be lost upon us.

"The inspired word sets the circumambient air in motion, and the movement increases more and more till it impinges on the human ear. There, through it, it penetrates far, into the human soul itself, and bears fruit."

The word of the great Rabbi Machman instils courage into our hearts.



## MORALITY OR RELIGION ?

*By H. D. Bhattacharya, M.A. B.L., (P.R.S.)*

[Mr. Bhattacharya is the Professor of Psychology in the University of Dacca. In the present article he discusses some aspects of the relation between religion and morality.]

**R**ELIGIOUS men all over the world are to-day deploring the general decay of faith. The churches are empty and the temples do not attract the enlightened. A political leader will have a much bigger audience than an eloquent preacher; and while people will willingly listen to discourses on the health of the body, they will turn away from sermons on the good of the soul. The religious edifices that the piety of an earlier generation had built up are to-day falling fast into disrepair or crumbling into dust except when they are taken over by the Archaeological Department, and preserved only as interesting monuments for the curious tourist and not as sacred places for the devout pilgrim. Gifts to religious bodies are meagre and infrequent, and the ministers of religion carry on a precarious existence on account of the decline of religious rites and festivals. In many communities the only religious ceremonies are connected with social events like marriages that can be legalised only by the performance of some sort of religious ceremony; and even these are dwindling, as civil law is providing for the recognition of relations and contracts without the encumbrances of a religious rite. If material existence is being more and more mechanised, spiritual existence is being more and more secularised. The inevitable effect of the contact of religiously alien groups has been

the evolution of a system of relations in which the religions of the parties concerned play no part. Human relations have no longer any eternal significance and marriage is fast becoming a contract liable, like other contracts not made in heaven, to dissolution by mutual consent or by laches on the part of either of the contracting parties. The enlightened section of the community no longer believes that the omission of death-bed ceremonies by the priest or the clergy, or the denial of church burial has any effect on the destiny of the individual (if he has any destiny at all), nor are precautions taken to ensure intercessory rites for the benefit of the soul after one's death.

It is natural that with the decline of faith should disappear many social practices that drew their inspiration and sanction from the authority of religion. In primitive times the only sure way of securing compliance was to invest each social conduct with a religious sanction and to stigmatised each failure of observance not as a breach of social etiquette but as a moral and spiritual lapse. An instance in point is food-tabu which has played an important part in almost every religion. Swine's flesh would in this way compromise the salvation of every orthodox Jew, Muslim and high-caste Hindu, and the door of heaven would be closed upon every wine-bibbing Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim. Many of the scriptural

injunctions including those against association with Gentiles and Untouchables, are, however openly defied to-day, and the laws of ceremonial cleanliness have no longer the binding force that they used to have in ancient times. Sea-voyage does not damn a Hindu soul any more—it has even ceased to bring down social ostracism in advanced sections of the community.

A variety of reasons is responsible for this new outlook on religious prescriptions. Acquaintance with other faiths has brought into light the relativity of many religious acts and ideas. What is prohibited in one religion would probably be found enjoined in another, and it would be easy to point out that the sure way of damnation in one religion is the highway to salvation in another. All religions have taken over so much from pre-existing beliefs and local superstitions that many so-called revelations are really survivals of primitive faith or tribal custom. The local and the temporary are writ large upon their face and a little critical and historical investigation exposes their human origin. Many of these prescriptions, again, are not rooted in the basic needs of individual and social life. Every moribund faith runs the risk of such a fatty degeneration and evolves prescriptions and prohibitions that round off neatly the scheme of human duties but have no foundation in the necessities of social existence.

The fact is that religion at one time included within itself a far fuller scheme of social legislation than it would do now. The ancient scriptures tried to encompass not only religious duties proper but also many social rites, just as they taught not only spiritual truths but also natural

science. With the advancing moral conceptions of the race many of the social prescriptions have failed to satisfy public conscience just as advancing scientific knowledge has exposed the crudities of many scriptural accounts of natural phenomena. If the eclipse is not caused by the swallowing of the sun or the moon by the demon or the dragon, obviously religious rites and social acts based on that supposition are useless. There may, of course, still remain a belief in the esoteric virtue of rites and acts performed at such rare astronomical moments; but it is no longer possible to base actions on theories exploded by science. Similarly, food-tabu of former times can no longer be justified by the primitive casual explanation of ancient scriptures, although it is still possible to put forward esoteric or utilitarian grounds for such prohibition.

The question is, what amount of liberty is permissible with scriptural injunctions and inhibitions and what would be the effect on morality if these are all withdrawn? There can be no doubt that 'hell-fire theology' is still the most potent instrument of social discipline so far as the general body of a religious community is concerned. No Arab would like to get after death into a place hotter than the burning deserts of his native land, nor would a Tibetan like to go to a place colder than the bleak heights of his own Himalayan plateau. There is much truth in the statement that even if God does not exist, it would be necessary to create one for social discipline; for the fear of displeasing God is still the dominant consideration for morality with the majority of the human race. If God were wholly benign and if hell were to disappear

altogether, the two primary restraints on immorality would be removed from the minds of most people. That hell is the utter loneliness of spirit, or a rumination on lost or misused opportunities of earthly existence, or a sense of remoteness from God, may appear satisfactory to the refined ethical sensibility of the writers of *WHAT IS REAL HELL ?* ; but there can be no doubt that the physical torments of hell are what ordinary people dread most. There is, therefore, pragmatic justification for the continuance of belief in a Divine Judge and a Divine Jail for the control of those whose submission to moral rules is dictated by the fear of the punishing rod of an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being. These people are moral only because they are religious in the sense that they believe in a divine dispenser of justice and determiner of destiny. The bribe of heaven and the threat of hell loom so large in every scripture because hedonistic motives alone have an appeal to most minds ; in fact, very often even the free will of God in rewarding virtue and punishing vice has to be kept in the background, and an automatic requital of moral actions emphasised, lest people should think that the reward of merit depends upon Divine grace and is, therefore, uncertain and contingent on Divine will. The Hindus postulated the law of Karma because virtuous actions should have certain reward. Kant who fought so much for the autonomous character of the moral law and the categorical character of the moral imperative ultimately succumbed to theological blandishment and thought that without the rewarding of virtue with happiness by God there would be a gap in the ultimate scheme of

things. In other words, the principle of duty for duty's sake would not work to the end, and although Kant concerned himself with the fate of the virtuous, there is no doubt that he had in his mind also the uncomfortable destiny of the vicious as a necessary correlate of the happiness of the good. Even in religious systems, transcendental hedonism had to be imported to ensure morality.

But must men be religious in order to be moral ? The lessons of evolution have thrown doubt on, if not totally discredited, the revelation of a complete ethical code to the first race of men to make them moral. In fact, the story of the rebellion of the first men against Divine injunctions (on which the doctrine of Original Sin is based) is a confession that men were no more moral at the beginning than now, if by morality is meant obedience to the law of conduct laid down by God. Even they could not understand the moral significance of an order prohibiting the use of certain food-stuff, and exercised their right of private judgment by disobeying it. We may believe that the dissociation of the moral from the religious—the socially significant from the spiritually beneficial—is an inevitable outcome of the growth of that secular culture which finds that among scriptural prescriptions there are some directions that are vitally linked up with social existence and there are others that have reference to man's real or fancied relations with the super-sensible. The remarkable similarity in the decadence of religious rites all over the world can be explained only by the supposition that the esoteric and the mysterious have lost their appeal for minds trained

in scientific methods of explanation by verifiable causes. Men no longer feel that by omitting this or that injunction, of which no rational explanation can be given, they are compromising the good of their own soul or doing bad and improper act. They may obey these as a matter of habit or for social decorum or for uniformity ; but the attitude of faith which alone makes them a vital possession has a tendency to evaporate with advancing scientific culture, and the obligatory character of the acts in question disappear.

But no religion can flourish on the merely mysterious—every religion must provide a basis for the moral relation of sentient creatures. Whether within the domain of these creatures is to be included any type of beings other than man, is more or less a matter of historical accident or tribal temperament. While unnecessary cruelty to dumb animals would be reprobated in most religions, not many religions would the length of Jainism or even of Buddhism and Vaishnavism in this matter, and imagine that before the judgment-throne of God would rise up the souls of victims belonging to the animal world and demand justice for murder or cruelty or abuse. Very often the main objection against wanton cruelty and unnecessary killing is that they harden hearts and establish a habit of callousness to the suffering even of one's own fellow-men ; and the excessive use of animal food may be condemned either on hygienic or on esoteric grounds as disturbing physiological or mental balance. But, apart from such debatable contents, the different religions of the world have a fairly common fund of moral precepts regulating the relations of

the different components of the social structure. An agreed list of essential moral virtues can be easily made out ; and although the meanings attached to them will often be found to be different, they no more establish the relativity of morals than the meanings of the terms like plants, animals etc., which are understood differently by the ordinary man and the expert. Even when at one time religious rites involved a negation of the right of other individuals to live, as in human sacrifice to please a god or to placate a dark spirit or to provide comforts to a just departed person in the other world, the motive was frequently to turn away an impending social danger.

If we start with the notion that morality and religion have been united in the human mind from the very beginning and that all moral relations are the outcome of religious beliefs, we shall be sorely mistaken. Religion is primarily man's attempt to come into touch and understanding with supersensible forces, not only through his intellect but through his whole personality consisting of thinking, feeling and willing. In the religious response there may in fact be an abnormal shrinkage of the social consciousness and the individual may feel that by taking up a correct attitude towards the invisible powers by which he is surrounded he is fulfilling the obligations of life, howsoever anti-social that attitude might be. Mortification of the flesh (resulting, in extreme cases, in religious suicide), asceticism, sacrificial cruelty (including human sacrifice), religious promiscuity or prostitution, religious persecution and kindred acts can be justified when we look upon them as attempts to placate the Deity without

reference to their social utility or moral justification. Possibly in some minds there is some lurking belief in their ultimate value for social life as a whole ; but in many minds the single motive of their being pleasing to God or beneficial to the self would prompt those acts and occupations. A fanatical oppressor of other faiths need not always be moved by moral considerations though he may occasionally do so. That culture blunts the edge of religious zeal is due to the fact that morality is not indissolubly wedded to religion and very often outstrips the latter in the human mind. A developed moral sense often detects the crudities and contradictions of moral life which the acceptance of a particular religious belief implies. With culture, for instance, came the consciousness in

Greece, Rome and India that the pictures of the gods and the acts enjoined in imitation of their conduct were sometimes morally ignominious and not countenanced by the moral sense of the best minds of the community. There is a limit even to the power of explaining inconvenient details of divine life as symbolic or allegorical ; and society has often been obliged to issue the warning that immoral divine acts are not to serve as patterns of human conduct. In fact, the Mediterranean religions perished because the gods became less moral than their devotees who, when they were obliged to make a choice between morality and religion, chose the former and abandoned the latter at first in favour of the one or other of the Mystery Religions, and ultimately of Christianity.

*(To be continued)*

## JAN VAN RUYSBROECK

*By Wolfram H. Koch*

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its saints and mystics. In the present study the reader will get a short life-sketch and a luminous string of inspiring excerpts from the writings of the eminent mystic, Ruysbroeck. The life and message of such and other kindred mystics of Europe only go to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence stand for the same God and the same spiritual ideal.]

"The light of man is the light of thought. The light of thought is above thoughts and surpasseth all thoughts. Yet, O men, be ye not dark, be ye not untrue, unrighteous, evil robbers, wretches, lovers of the world. This, forsooth, is darkness. Light is not gone away, but ye are away from the light. The blind man in the sun hath the sun present, but he is away from the sun. Therefore is he not dark ? Yet, again, the world is dark, because the lovers of the world are dark ; and the world is evil because they who dwell in the world are evil, as a house is bad, not in its walls, but because of those who dwell therein."—(*Early English Instruction*)

**J**AN van Ruysbroeck was born in the year 1293 in a village about two miles distant from Brussels, from

which he took his name, as was the custom in Mediæval times. His family name is completely unknown,

and the very silence regarding his parentage indicates that he must have been of humble extraction. Biographers have devoted many a beautiful page to his mother who seems to have been a woman of an exceptionally strong moral character and deep faith in the higher forms of life, but his father is never mentioned in any of their works.

In 1304 he left his home and went to the house of his uncle, Jan Hinckaert, the canon of the famous cathedral of Sainte Gudule at Brussels where he received the greatest part of his education and was enabled to visit the Latin schools.

He took Holy Orders in 1317 at the age of 24, though he never rose to a higher grade than that of a Chaplain. He was placed under the direction of his uncle. The day after his ordination, while celebrating his first Mass, he experienced his first Divine ecstasy.

In 1343 he left Brussels and the world in the company of his aged uncle and of Jan van Afflinghom, generally called 'Bonus Cokus' (the Good Cook), to found the monastery of Groenendaal of which he became the Prior in later years. He died on December 2nd, 1381.

Jan van Ruysbroeck is truly the last of the great speculative mystics of the Middle Ages, but his mysticism never became to him an end in itself, but the most perfect means of true and unfailing knowledge of life and its purpose. If he was able to solve the problems of many a soul and to exert his holy and far-seeing influence on those who really sought his counsel and advice with an open heart, this was chiefly due to his clear recognition of the presence and the working of the Divine in the very depths of every human

soul, however degraded and however darkened it might be by worldly and creaturely love as well as by false valuations of life. In all his teachings as well as in his life of dedication and infinite goodness, one feels, as it were, the quiet and peace of the beautiful woodlands surrounding the monastery of Groenendaal (Green Valley), where he used to go to meditate and to receive the message of the Highest. He recognised very clearly that Adam's Fall was not due to evil, as such, but that it was the result of his choice between the Divine Oneness and the life of the senses. The more 'Adam' seeks his enjoyment in the sense-world and in the fulfilment of sensual desires, bodily or mental, and the more he clings to personal claims of affection, the more he goes to his ultimate ruin in the form of self-annihilation; and this of his own free will. It is not the Divine who has decreed that choice, but his own preference of sense-enjoyment and of those forms of love which are bound to the senses and to individuals.

The one obstacle between man and the Divine has always been the multiplicity of objects presented and desired by the senses, and so long as these senses are not curbed and placed unconditionally at the service of the Divine without any further thoughts of their satisfaction, none will ever be able to trace his steps back to the One where all is clarity, peace and illumination.

So Plotinus says in a beautiful passage: — "Enter into thyself and examine thyself. And if thou dost not yet find Beauty, do as the artist does, who cuts, takes away, polishes and purifies. Purify thus thy soul of all that is superfluous, straighten that which is not straight, illumine that

which is dark, and do not cease from perfecting thyself till Virtue shines before thine eyes. When thou shalt not encounter any obstacle that prevents thee from being one, when nothing foreign to thee will any longer alter the simplicity of thy most intimate essence, then go and look attentively, for it is only through the eye which opens in thee at that time, that thou canst perceive the Supreme Beauty."

Jan van Ruysbroeck's attitude and realisation find a beautiful expression in his own words: "*Vos estis tam sancti sicut vultis. Tantum enim quisque sanctus est, quantum afficitur bonitati.*"—"You are as holy as it is your wish to be. For everyone is as holy as he is moved by good. The measure of your holiness depends solely on the excellence of your will. Look into yourself to see what is the quality of your will. Then you shall find out the value of your holiness."

He never allowed himself to become a slave to activity, but daily returned to the Divine Source within himself, asking for guidance and light and contenting himself with repeating to others what the Divine had that day revealed to him. If nothing had been revealed, he remained silent and quietly withdrew into himself, surrendering his will and all his wishes to the Divine.

According to Ruysbroeck man should never despise his body, i.e., never give himself to any lower form of bodily enjoyment and lust, because even the elements of which his body is made, can never perish, but shall have to return to the great storehouse after his death. So he should look upon them as only borrowed. The body is the precious casket in which the soul is kept, and the physi-

cal side of man's nature is, as it were, but a sub-structure on which his higher personality rests and which must be made use of for higher purposes of life. To Ruysbroeck 'spirit' is but a name for a soul which has become fit to reach Unity. This Unity ever belongs to it essentially, whether a man be a sinner or a saint. He says, "Every creature in its very essence, its life and its conservation, depends entirely on this Unity. To separate itself from God would be throwing itself into the abyss of nothingness. But this essential Unity cannot make it holy or happy without its own co-operation." To him man is always the sole arbiter of his destiny, and all those who turn their minds and hearts away from worldly attachments and affections, determined to trace their steps back to the Divine, receive by this very determination the necessary grace with the help of which they can do so. Others do not, although they, too, shall be given many an occasion again and again to mend their ways. If they persistently refuse to trace their way back to the Divine Source, they condemn themselves to the sufferings of Hell by their own free will.

Jan van Ruysbroeck distinguishes seven steps in the path which every man must follow to reach perfection.

- (1) Identification of our will with the Divine Will ;
- (2) Voluntary poverty ;
- (3) Purity of soul and perfect chastity of body in thought, word and deed ;
- (4) An intimate knowledge of our own imperfections ;
- (5) To have our pleasure in God alone ;

(6) A definite and clear intuition arising from the purity of our thought ;

(7) The state of 'unknowing' in unlimited rest and peace.

Any man who wishes to attain to the higher forms of life must do away with all pictured images which are not God. He must not possess anything with covetousness. He must never, under any circumstance, allow himself to become attached or bound to another person through some natural impulse or inclination, for "every attachment and every human affection encumber the heart of man, except those that are only given to God." So worldly distractions and pursuits, creaturely love and clinging to others or allowing others to centre their affection on oneself instead of on God, trying to keep a personal claim on a person's love, and unchastity in thought, word or deed, were to him the principal causes which separated man from his Divine Essence and prevented his union with the Divine, blinding him to Truth. On the other hand, purity, selflessness and non-attachment coupled with infinite kindness to all, forbearance and unshakable and single-minded devotion to the Divine were the best means of attaining to the highest communion with the Divine. The message of Truth has ever been the same in the East as in the West to people who are able to see beyond their own limited sphere of egoistic and pleasure-seeking love, and who are prepared to receive it with open ears and hearts.

About Ruysbroeck's death there is a touching, simple story which should not be left out as it shows the influence of his way of life on those around him. The brothers who were keeping watch over his body after his death,

suddenly saw him get up and go to an altar. He was dressed in his priestly robes and surrounded and permeated by a dazzling and indescribable splendour. On the following day the brothers buried their beloved prior, full of devotion and joy at having seen him whom they loved and revered with all their heart, come back to life once again. Thus the human heart ever renders homage and allegiance to those who are examples of perfect love, self-surrender and purity.

The following brief quotations are taken from three of Ruysbroeck's minor treatises: *Dat Rijke der Ghelieven* (The Kingdom of Lovers), *Een Spieghel der Eewigher Salicheit* (A Mirror of Eternal Bliss) and *Van Zeven Trappen in den Graed der Gheesteleker Minnen* (Of Seven Steps in the Degree of Spiritual Love). In the case of Jan van Ruysbroeck, no short quotations can ever give an adequate idea of his greatness and the depth of his realisation. So all people who feel a deeper interest for the message of Truth coming to us through the different instruments of the Divine should study his works in their entirety and perhaps even in the original Brabant dialect in which they were written.

#### THE PLACE OF THE HUMAN WILL

"You are as holy as it is your wish to be."

"No thing and no man have power over our free will, neither the celestial bodies, nor any creature, nor any thing but God alone and we ourselves."

#### NON-ATTACHMENT, PURITY AND CHASTITY

"There are people who would gladly receive Divine Consolation, were it to



be had without costing them anything. They believe everything to be indispensable that they may possibly obtain them and pass them on to the body for its enjoyment and well-being. But if any man thus follows the promptings of Nature and pursues indiscriminately the well-being and satisfaction of his own body, his heart becomes encumbered by this, and he loses all taste and liking for the good viands, *i.e.*, for all virtues."

"Man may eat of all fruits that are virtuous and get consolation and joy from them, always growing in grace. But the fruit of lustful desire is forbidden to him—that is, to live according to nature in sensual enjoyment. In that very hour in which the highest reason eats of that fruit of unchastity and has intercourse with women, *i.e.*, with the senses and the enemy, contrary to God's law and will, man is expelled from Paradise, naked and stripped of all virtues, and banished and separated from the Eternal Kingdom of God."

"We must hold strict watch over ourselves and guard ourselves against three sins which hold sway over the body: laziness, gluttony and unchastity. Through them many a man of good intentions has fallen into abysmal sin."

"As against gluttony, we must love and choose moderation and sobriety, always restraining ourselves and taking less than we should like, remaining satisfied with the barest necessities."

"As against laziness, we must feel in our innermost soul faithfulness and right intention, and have compassion for all misery, and outwardly we must quickly and zealously be ready for anyone who is in need of

us, according to our capacity, discrimination and conscience."

"As against unchastity, we must avoid and flee from all loose and worldly company and associations, and from all intimacy with those of the world, as far as our outward conduct is concerned, and inwardly we must flee from and avoid all impure imaginations and mental pictures, so that we do not pay any attention to them, nor dwell on them with lustful desire, for by so doing we should become deformed and impure in nature."

"We should strictly guard ourselves against all impure, worldly and evil company, that is, against all those who are unchaste, who love telling lies, who swear and blaspheme God, and who are impure in their words and deeds. Such should be avoided, and we should flee from them as from the Enemy in Hell. Guard your eyes and your ears, so that you may not see nor hear what is forbidden."

"Therefore keep yourself pure, love to be alone, flee from all manifoldness; do your devout practices, busying your hands with good work. Avoid inordinate and lustful pleasures, and do not be in love with yourself. Love Life and Truth. And even if you find yourself to be pure, avoid the very occasion to sin."

"Love that is wrong stultifies the poor mind and blinds the reason of man. Men seek pleasure that is foreign to their true essence and thus cannot reach that wealth which is Unity. That which renders it so difficult to receive the Eternal, is to live in unchastity."

"If you must speak to a person, be he spiritual or worldly, be cautious, reserved and dignified, well-ordered in words and manners, so

that no one may feel angry with you, and always prefer listening and silence to speaking. Be just, truthful and frank, in words and in works, in doing and in leaving undone, and inwardly always walk before the eyes of God. And if you become distracted through speaking and answering, and feel drawn away from union with God, realising and being aware of this, you should be ashamed of yourself, and with undivided contemplation quickly again enter into yourself before the face of God. And so long as you are able to enter into yourself whenever you wish to do so, keeping perfect mastery over yourself, you will have peace and you will live without deadly sins. Therefore I advise you to avoid and flee from cares and restlessness of heart, from the unsteadiness and manifoldness of men, especially of worldly men, unpractised in spiritual or God-devoted life. Seek and desire alone an inward, burning life, and practise this till self-communion and insight with comprehending eyes become as easy and ready as the searching out and looking out with the physical eyes. And if you must use your five senses for the sake of your maintenance, or that of your fellow men, guard your ears and your eyes in order not to take in anything which may distract your heart with pleasure, with lust or with love, and which may draw it away from God and stand between you and Him. Should inordinate love and lust take hold of you, you would lose the mastery over yourself and the free self-communion in which lies all your bliss. Be moderate also in food and in drink as well as in all that your body needs, so that you do not live according to the clamourings of your flesh and of the lust of Nature. For if you find plea-

sure and lust in yourself or in any creature, you have already turned away from God and cannot live for Him, and so will die in sin."

#### TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS

"This is Righteousness : to be emptied of all creatures and be free from anxiety for them ; to be lifted up in intention, desire, soul, body, eyes, hands, and in all that one can do ; to give God praise and honour in time and in Eternity ; and not to seek joy in creatures and created things, for that produces manifoldness and hinders righteousness. But he who lives thus in Love, is never without great joy."

"The joyful Bliss of God lies in qualitylessness and in the dissolution of the person into that undifferentiated Essence of God."

"In four ways man can see whether he be righteous and guided by Christ in the strength of the Holy Ghost. The first is whether one leaves to God all that one needs in time and in Eternity, and whether one is faithful to God in all that one possesses and in all that one can do. The second is whether one cherishes compassion in will and in works for all human misery and distress, be it bodily or spiritual. The third point is whether one remains patient and mild in all that may befall one from God or from creatures. The fourth is an elevated mind, free from and uncaught by any creature or creaturely love, in a single and steady affection, in a joyful waiting for the Eternal Kingdom with a firm faith. These four points make man righteous in active life. There are four other points which make him righteous in contemplative life. The first is a free mind, holding on to Love and lifted up in desire for Unity. The second is a clear under-

standing of the wonder of the wealth of the Trinity, and contemplating without surprise that immeasurable clarity, becoming transformed into it and being lifted up in the light of Oneness. The third is a joyful inclination and an absorbed holding of all one's powers for God, surrounded and permeated and flooded by greater wealth and joys than these powers

of the world could ever give. The fourth is becoming absorbed and lost in that one Object. None may walk in darkness, for thereby one remains lost in Eternity which is the highest bliss. These four points together with the four previous ones make man righteous in contemplation and righteous in action."

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

[OR THE GOSPEL OF DIVINE LOVE ACCORDING TO SAGE NARADA]

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of Sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Gnani* as well as a *Bhakta*. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRA 2.

*Bhakti* may be viewed from the standpoint either of the aspirant or of the realised man. In the former view it is the means of achievement—the *Apara* or *Gauni Bhakti*. In the latter, known as *Para Bhakti*, it is the result, and is the expression in actual life. As a tree should be known by its best and most well-developed fruit, Narada begins by giving us, in the next *Sutra*, a description of *Para Bhakti*. To identify anything, one must note its similarities and dissimilarities with ordinary known phenomena. This is what is attempted in the following *Sutra*.

सा तु अस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपा । २

सा = That (*Bakhti*) तु = but  
अस्मिन् = in This परमप्रेमरूपा = of the nature of supreme Love (*भवति* is).

2. But<sup>1</sup> that<sup>2</sup> is of<sup>3</sup> the nature of supreme<sup>4</sup> Love of This<sup>5</sup>

NOTES 1. *But*.—This is meant to draw the attention of the aspirant to the fact that the scientific idea of

devotion is somewhat different from the crude notions of the ordinary man full of desires. People approach various supernatural beings such as *Devas*, *Pitris*, etc., through rites and ceremonies, and offer gifts and sacrifices out of fear for them and to ward off their wrath. Or they may try to propitiate them in expectation of some gain in return. This kind of devotion is not worthy of the name of *Bhakti*.

Again though the *Bhagavata* and other *Puranas* say that even fear, anger and other emotions, if directed against God Himself, can lead to *Mukti*, Narada is not prepared to call it *Bhakti*, nor to advocate such practices.

The following quotations inculcate the kind of devotion through feelings contrary to love, with which Narada is not in agreement: "They indeed lose themselves in Hari, who constantly cherish towards Him the feelings of love, hatred, fear, friendliness, oneness or goodwill" (*Bhag. X, 29-15*).

"On whatever object a corporeal being may concentrate his whole mind with his intellect, either through love or through hate or through fear, he attains the form of that very object" (*Bhag.* XI, 9, 22). "I believe that some *Asuras* are also devotees of Vishnu, their minds being impregnated with *Bhakti* through the medium of anger" (*Bhag.* III, 2, 24). But to follow the footsteps of a Kamsa or Sisupala would be to court disaster, in the case of an ordinary man. These illustrations are given in the *Puranas* only to show how much more easy it would be to obtain salvation through *Bhakti* or love when God is so gracious as to save even his enemies. This is made clear in the following statement of *Atri Smṛiti*: "Remembering Govinda even through hatred, Sisupala attained Heaven. What to say of those who are devoted to Him!" Sandilya also makes the point clear in his 6th *Sutra*. He says, "Devotion is of the nature of love, because it is the converse of hate and because it is expressed by the word *Rasa* in *Taittiriya Upanishad* II, 7" (*Sandilya* VI 6-7). Moreover in *Gita* XVI, 16 it is specifically mentioned that all those who hate God go in for spiritual ruin. Another reason for the *Bhakti* scriptures giving these illustrations of Sisupala and others is to show that, if at all anger has to be shown, it is better to sublimate it by directing it to God, for then in the long run there is at least a chance of remembering the Lord. It is with this view that Narada himself refers it in *Sutra* 65.

*Bhakti* should not also be confused with mere emotional excitement or eroticism, as is often done, nor with fanaticism which sometimes passes for

religiosity and leads to all kinds of sectarian quarrels and bloodshed. It is not even mere credulousness or blind belief or faith in whatever the priests may put into one's head, nor what the so-called *Sastras*, good, bad and indifferent, may be interpreted to say. It is not also scriptural knowledge or logic-chopping or metaphysical speculations.

2. *That*.—Refers to the *Bhakti* referred to in the previous *Sutra*. In Sanskrit the third personal pronoun is often used to denote *Prasiddhi* or common knowledge. The word may therefore be taken to indicate that *Bhakti* is already well known to all; only its real nature and implications are not clearly grasped by all. Hence the necessity for a clear definition. There is also a subtle suggestion that the experience of *Bhakti* is not a rare, isolated, individual, subjective hallucination eluding all scientific treatment, but that it is a common experience of all devotees, and as such deserves careful consideration at the hands of all lovers of truth, and is fit to be made the subject of enquiry and study in a scientific spirit.

3. *Of the nature of*.—The expression conveys the sense that real *Bhakti*, being a transcendental experience of bliss, is different from ordinary love, and can never be expressed adequately in words. Cf. *Tait. Up.* II, 4: "Whence all speech turns back, with the mind, without reaching. He who knows the bliss of Brahman fears not at any time." The author himself adverts to it in *Sutras* 51 & 52. But Narada as an exponent of the doctrine of *Bhakti* has in some way or other to convey his meaning through words and analogies. Hence he has to adopt the method of ex-

plaining the unknown in terms of the known, *i.e.*, convey an idea of transcendental experience in terms of common love. The word *Rupa*, meaning, 'of the nature of', is used only to convey this implication.

4. *Supreme Love*.—This is to distinguish *Bhakti* from ordinary human love between the sexes. Supremacy of Love consists in three things. First, it should be such as is not based upon selfishness or egoism, and must be untainted by any base ulterior motive such as fear or gain. Secondly, it should be such as to prevent any other worldly love in the mind of the devotee. Thirdly, there should be complete self-forgetfulness on the part of the lover.

The word *Prema* or Love ordinarily suggests that there must be three entities, *viz.*, the lover, the beloved and the bond of love between them. It is a bone of contention between different schools of thought as to whether any sense of distinction between the three can be felt in the highest spiritual experience. The *Advaitins* deny any such distinction, but the other schools insist that Love or enjoyment of bliss cannot be where there is no such distinction. It is, however, commonly admitted by both the schools that the intensity of the experience may be such as to make the lover forget himself for the moment in the midst of his enjoyment. The difference between the two schools of thought is therefore confined to the question whether the individuality of the experiencing soul is actually lost or not. This is, however, only a metaphysical question with which the *Bhakti* scripture is not primarily concerned.

It would seem, however, that from the point of view of Love also, the

union between the lover and the beloved can be said to be complete only where there is absolute merging of the lover in the Beloved, *i.e.*, when the ego completely disappears. This is indeed the highest experience of all saints as we find it described in the literatures of the world. For example, Sri Suka says in *Bhagavata* X, 29, 15, "Those indeed lose themselves in Hari." So also in describing the Divine Love of a Gopi the *Bhagavata* X, 30, 19 says, "A Gopi whose mind is given to Krishna places her arm on another and says, 'See, I am Krishna'." Again in XI, 12, 12, the *Bhagavata* says, "Their heart and mind being fastened on Me in devotion, they were not conscious of their body, or what was far or near, just as sages are not, while in deep meditation, or as rivers that have entered the sea water are not distinguished by name and form." Again in X, 30, 43 of the same book it is said: "Their hearts given to Him, they talked of Him alone: they imitated his sportful activities; they could not think of themselves as different from Him. They sang only of his excellent attributes; they did not think of their homes."

The same idea is beautifully illustrated by the Sufi poet who describes how in spite of repeated knockings at his Beloved's door, the latter did not deign to open it until he so far forgot himself as to answer, in reply to a query from within, "I am thyself." Jalaludin Rumi says, "Then shall we rise from the angels and merge in the Nameless." Al Hujviri, another Sufi, says, "When a man becomes annihilated from his attributes, he attains perfect subsistence. He is neither far nor near, neither stranger nor intimate, neither sober nor intoxicated, neither separated nor united; he has

no name or sign or brand or mark." (Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali, Pp. 172, 213). Al Hallaj, the Sufi martyr, says, "I am the truth, I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I." According to Jami, 'I' and 'thou' have here no place, and are but phantasies, vain and unreal" (Browne's Literary History of Persia). (Cf. also Mohammed's 'Inni-an-Allahu la ilaha illa Ana' which is an exact translation of Isaiah: "Verily, I, even I, am God, and there is none else.")

Witness again the saying of Jesus, "I and my Father are One." Ruysbroeck, the Dutch mystic, says, "We have lost ourselves, and been melted away into the Unknown Darkness." Speaking of his experience, the philosopher and mystic John Scotus Eriugena says, "In this state of mystical ignorance, we plunge into the Divine Darkness and lose ourselves in Its life." According to the Neo-Platonists, the highest stage of union with God cannot be realised by thought, and is possible only in a state of ecstasy in which the soul transcends its own thought, loses itself in the soul of God, becomes one with God. Averroes, the Moorish philosopher of Spain, says that "it (the individual soul) becomes one with the Universal Spirit or is absorbed in It." According to Bonaventura, "The soul transcends itself, enters upon a stage of holy ignorance, and becomes one with the Divine will through love." According to the German mystic Eckhart "The soul does not stop till it has passed beyond all differences and has entered the silent desert, into which no difference has ever penetrated, which is immovable and supreme over all oppositions and divisions." Again in another place he says, "Whoever

would see God must be dead to himself and buried in God." According to Schelling, the goal is a return to God, to be realised in a mystical intuition in which the soul strips off its selfhood, and becomes absorbed in the Absolute. Cf also Goethe's lines:

By nothing godlike could the heart be won

Were not the heart itself Divine.

5. *Of This.*—The expression refers to the object of Love, namely God. Narada is very careful not to use any metaphysical or theological expression such as *Brahman*, *Isvara*, *Bhagavan*, *Atma*, etc., nor personal names like Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, etc., lest his teaching should be taken to be sectarian. The indefinite neuter pronoun is very suggestive of the transcendence and immanence of God, as 'this' in contrast to 'that' shows something very near. The object of *Bhakti* is the Soul of our own souls, the *Antaryamin* of the *Upanishads*. The first personal or second personal pronoun would have been mistaken for the subject or object of relative knowledge, and would have given rise to the false notion of God being merely personal. Throughout his work, Narada does not attempt a definition of God as in the *Brahma Sutras*, for he feels that to describe God is to bring Him down to the level of the finite object of relative knowledge. In fact all descriptions of God can be only relative to the stage of spiritual development of the aspirant, and must be coloured by the predilections, capacities, and needs of the person describing, or to whom the description is addressed.

There is a good deal of controversy as to whether God is with form or without it, whether He is personal or impersonal, whether He is with attri-

butes or not, whether He is the material cause or efficient cause or both, etc. These disputes, we must remember, are relevant only to the relative plane of *Sadhana*. Each view is only a partial view of the whole truth. On the doctrine of the Chosen Ideal, each aspirant may conceive Him in his own way as the most perfect and ideal being that he can think of, so as to suit his own capacities and needs, and then love and worship that ideal with his whole heart. Only he should have charity enough to give the same freedom of thought and worship to others, and not to trespass on their individual rights. The aspirant must also not forget that his God is nothing else than his own view of the Truth from his level of spiritual development, and that the God of another is but another view of the same Truth from another standpoint.

The sage Sandilya notes the difference of opinion between Vyasa and Kashyapa on the nature of the Deity to be realised, and reconciles both views in his *Sutras* 29, 30 and 31 thus : "Kashyapa declares that realisation refers to Iswara or the Lord, because God is immeasurably superior to the worshipper. Vyasa says it refers to the *Atman*. Sandilya says that it refers to both, for ultimately both are the same, because of Scriptural authority and reasoning." The *Chandogya Up.* III, 14, 1-4 shows that *Brahman* to be worshipped and realised is the same as the *Atman* seated in the heart. The great *Mahavakyas* such as *Aham Brahmasmi*, etc., echo only the same truth. So also in *Gita* XIII, 3, Bhagavan Krishna says that He is himself the *Kshetrajna*. *Brahma Sutra* IV, 3 says that the *Sruti* texts acknowledge *Brahman* as the self and also teach

others to realise it as such, and *Sankara* commenting on the same quotes the *Jabala Sruti*, "I am indeed Thou, O Lord, and Thou art indeed Myself," as showing the nature of real worship. Thus it is a case of a man loving his own higher self or nature, his own real self, which he has forgotten, and which for purposes of *Sadhana* is conceived of in the beginning as something different from but infinitely superior to him. The God thus worshipped is the man's ideal of his own future greatness into which he has to develop himself by effort. *Sadhana* thus begins with separating in imagination the God within from the empirical self and investing Him with all the noble qualities which one would like to develop in oneself but which one has not got at present. The individual gradually acquires all the fundamental characteristics of the ideal, i.e., God, and in course of time feels himself as part of God and finally realises Him as His own self. This is echoed in the famous lines : "When I think of myself as embodied being. I am your servant ; when I think of myself as an individual soul, I am part of you ; but when I realise 'I am *Atman*,' I am one with you. This is my firm conviction."

The various objective ideals which devotees worship according to their spiritual development may be classified as follows :

1. The object may be a Personal God like Vishnu, Shiva, etc.
2. It may be a concrete representation of such Deity, or a symbol such as a *Pratika* or *Pratima* which would remind him of the Personal God.
3. It may be an actual man in flesh and blood such as an *Avatar*. *Vide Sandilya Sutras* 46 and 55 : "Such devotion may be

directed towards the incarnations of God also. The same results from devotion to well-known incarnations also." 4. The object may be one's own *Guru*. 5. It may be not any one special individual, but humanity as a whole. 6. It may not merely be humanity but the whole world conceived as the manifestation of the Supreme Being. 7. It may be the *Antaryamin* or inner controller of all the objects in the world. 8. It may be one's own transcendental *Atman*.

But *Pura Bhakti* or the higher Love is possible only if Love is directed towards these, after the realisation of the transcendental experience referred to above, and these objects of worship are loved as the devotee's own self. That the devotee may continue to keep his identity separate even after this transcendental experience is attested to by many authorities. *Vide Bhagavatam*: "Sages delighting in their own self, though they are free from all fetters, still continue to be devoted to the Personal God. That is the special merit of Hari."

There are many persons of the highest spiritual realisation who retain a little of their individuality to enjoy the bliss of the company of God, for they say that it is better to taste sugar than become one with it. Others again desire to serve the world and for that keep their individuality. A third set of *Bhaktas* never cares about keeping their individuality or giving it up but surrenders the will to God and allows Him to make use of it in any way He likes. But in every one of these instances, we should remember that the individuality of the man before and after realisation is not the same. The old natural

man has vanished for ever, and only the divine man remains.

In *Bhagavatam* XI, 2 and 45 to 47 Hari Himself speaks about various grades of *Bhaktas*. "He is the foremost of *Bhaktas* who finds in every being the God that is his own self, and finds all these beings in his own self which is God. He is a middling devotee who cherishes affection, friendly feeling, compassion and indifference respectively towards *Isvara*, to his devotees, to the ignorant and to those who hate Him. He is a beginner who worships with faith Hari in images only and not in His devotees and others." Again in *Mahanirvana Tantra* we read: "The highest stage is to be always living in the consciousness that you are *Brahman*, next comes the stage of meditation on the Divine Being, next in order comes prayer, *Japam* etc. External worship is the lowest of all." In another text we read: "The ordinary man's God is in water, an intelligent man's God is in the heavens, of the children in stocks and stone, but the wise man's God is in his own self." Yet another text says: "The highest is the truly and inherently natural condition of self-realisation, wherein the Self realises its own all-inclusive nature; next comes the meditation of various divine beings, the third is worship of images, and the fourth is worship by offering *Homa* and going on pilgrimages." "The God of the man of ritual is in the fire, the God of the man of feeling is in the heart, the God of undeveloped minds is in images, but the God of the man of knowledge is everywhere." "They who cannot find Shiva, the Supreme God, in their own self, seek for that outside, in holy places. The Yogis see it, not in images but in themselves."



We thus find that the *Bhakta*, according to Narada, is the same as the *Jivanmukta* described in *Laghu Yogavasishtha* Ramayana 5th *Sarga*, the *Brahmana* described in *Anusasana Parva*, Chap. 251 of *Mahabharata*, the *Gunatita* described in *Gita*, Chapter XIV., the *Sthithapragna* described in *Gita*, Ch. II, the *Bhakta* mentioned in *Gita*, Chapter XII, and the *Ativanasrami* described in *Suta Samhita*, *Mukti Khanda*, 5th Chapter. The identification of all these is made in *Jivanmukti Viveka* Chapter I by Vidyaranya who says :

स्मृतिषु जीवन्मुक्तः स्थितप्रज्ञभगवद्भक्तगुणातीत-  
ब्राह्मणातिवर्णश्रम्यादिनामभिः तत्र तत्र व्यवहर्यते ।  
The *Jivanmukta* is called in different *Smritis* by various names such as *Sthithapragna* and others mentioned above.

Thus Narada's *Para Bhakti* is something different from what ordinary people understand by it. It is the culmination of all spiritual practice by any or all the *Yogas* whatsoever, manifesting itself in actual life as unselfish love for love's sake towards God in all the creatures who

are seen to be the same as one's own self, and expressing itself in the form of unselfish service in the spirit of worship.

To summarise our discussion, the *Sutra* conveys the following meaning: Divine Love, which forms the topic of this book, is not of a bargaining type, nor an erotic feeling, nor a fanatical zeal. It is not also a remembrance born of hatred. It is of the nature of supreme Love—supreme because it is transcendental and free from all worldly taint, and it is yet called Love because, being inexpressible in a direct manner, some idea of it can be conveyed only through terms connected with well-known phases of worldly love. Its uniqueness consists in that it is directed towards supreme Being who is not the God of a creed or sect, but the transcendent and immanent Deity forming the Self of all and objectified for purposes of devotion. The highest love for Him can, however, be had only when the devotee realises Him as his own self, and then objectifies Him as the centre of his devotion.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Srimad Bhagavadgita Rahasya Vol. II :**  
*By Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.A., LL.B. Published by Tilak Bros., Lokamanya Tilak Mandir, 568, Narayan Peth, Poona City. Price, Parts 1 & 2 together Rs. 10. Pages, 1210.*

We had occasion to publish an elaborate review of the first part of this book some time back. The second volume contains the remaining part of the elaborate Introduction, which is not complete in the first volume, and the text of the *Gita* together with the English translation of it and of Tilak's commentary verse by verse. Since we have already written at length about

the standpoint taken by Tilak in the interpretation of the *Gita*, we do not add anything more on the subject in this connection. Suffice it to say that the author's main effort is to show that the *Gita* supports the *advaita* philosophy, and that, unlike the common notion entertained by *Advaitins*, it does not find any conflict between an active life devoted to the fulfilment of one's social and civic duties, and the realisation of Non-duality.

In point of erudition and philosophical profundity, this modern commentary on the *Gita* is in no way inferior to its counterparts by the great *Acharyas* of the past, and the *Gita* lovers all the world over will

find it immensely helpful to gain a deeper understanding of the great scripture. Since the author has dealt at length with the subject matter of the Gita in his elaborate Introduction, his comments are mainly meant to elucidate the meaning of the text, and for interpretation and discussion of the philosophical problems involved, the reader is given references to the pages and chapters of the Introduction. The value of the present edition is enhanced by the indices of the stanzas and words of the Gita, as well as by those relating to the authors referred to in the book, and to the definitions of technical Sanskrit terms used.

The translator especially requires a word of praise for the very lucid rendering he has made into English of this book of first rate importance.

**Daopanishads : With the Commentary of Sri Upanishad-Brahmayogin. Vol. II. (Sanskrit). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price Rs. 5.**

We had the pleasure of introducing to our readers through our review columns the special features of this edition of the Daopanishads while noticing the first volume of the book in our October issue for 1936. The second part comprises the two remaining Upanishads, viz., the Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka, with the commentary of Upanishad-Brahmayogin. This volume thus completes a set of seven volumes incorporating all the 108 Upanishads uniformly accompanied by the commentary of the same author. As we have pointed out on the previous occasion, although the commentator closely follows Sri Sankaracharya, his work is in no way a replica of the great Acharya's

Bhashya. In many places he interprets in a more concise and lucid way, and sometimes cites parallel quotations from the minor Upanishads. The editors have done their work in a very praiseworthy manner. Unlike many other editions, here the textual words occurring in the course of the commentary are given in a bolder face so that the work may be serviceable even to the beginners. The text units are printed distinctly and without splitting, so that the book will be of use to those who would like to choose this edition for their *Parayanam*. The edition contains also an index of names, a table of detailed contents and a list of significant terms. It is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to studies in the Upanishads.

**Brahmaavidya : Vol. I, Part 1. The Adyar Library Bulletin, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.**

With the completion of the Upanishad series, the authorities of the Adyar Library have started the above quarterly bulletin for the purpose of making the priceless treasures of the Adyar Library known to the lovers of Oriental learning all over the world. The first part of this Bulletin, which is before us, gives an earnest of the superior excellence and critical scholarship we may expect in the ensuing parts which promise to be a mine of information not only to professional students of Indology, but also to general students of religion, philosophy and aesthetics. Besides the originals of Madhava's Commentary on Rig-Veda and Asvalayana's Grihya Sutra with the Commentary of Devaswami, we have here for the first time translated into English, Advaitatarka, Amitanada, Amritabindu and Kshurika Upanishads.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Swami Avinashananda in Fiji.

Swami Avinashananda, deputed by the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission in response to a long-standing and repeated request made by the South Indian Association of Fiji, arrived at Suva by the R. M. S. Niagara on 21st May, and a public reception was accorded to him at the Town Hall on the next day by the Indian repre-

sentatives of the Colony with Dr. C. M. Copakan on the chair. The Hall was full with a large crowd brimming with enthusiasm and joyous expectation at the revived memories of the people's deep spiritual link with the mother country. Following the several speeches made by distinguished Indian residents of the place, the Swami rose amidst great ovation to address the

crowded audience. He thanked the general public for the very touching reception and expressed his extreme pleasure to find the Indians living thousands of miles away from India still mindful of their heritage from the mother land. He also impressed on the audience that it was the principle of the Mission which he represented, to eschew all connection with politics, and to serve humanity forgetting all difference of creed, caste, colour, nationality or race. Therefore he requested the Indian residents of the Colony to cultivate among themselves the spirit of unity, brotherly love, co-operation, and above all, of a high, upright, ethical life.

The enthusiasm was as wide-spread as the reception was rousing. Visitors who sought interviews were innumerable, and the excellent services of the Volunteer Corps was highly useful. Next day a car procession with the Swami went through six districts. On the route at more than thirty places the Swami was warmly received and profusely garlanded. In many places he addressed monster meetings in English, Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani. At Nandi he was presented a welcome address. All the Indian community joined hands in this function and thus demonstrated how a spiritual emissary from the mother country can infuse a sense of cultural unity in the minds of Indians hailing from different provinces and living far away from their mother land.

#### Swami Siddheswarananda's departure to Paris.

At the request of some friends of the Vedanta movement in Paris, Swami Siddheswarananda has sailed to attend the Philosophical Congress that is being held there. Since many friends of India in France desire to have in their country a representative of the Ramakrishna Order who could help in bringing about a closer spiritual contact between Europe and India, it is hoped that the Swami will stay on for some time in Paris to study the possibilities of opening a permanent centre

of service there for the spread of Vedantic ideas.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham, Report for 1936.

The main objects of this Sangham are :—  
(1) To gather a band of workers whose ideal is service to the poor and the illiterate, and to train them for such service in a spirit of worship. (2) To work among the poor and the illiterate in order to relieve them of their poverty, sickness and ignorance, and spread education and culture among them. The membership of the Sangham is open to all who are ready to devote at least one hour's labour of love. There are at present 20 members on the role as against 12 during last year, states the report which is published in October, 1936. The activities of the Sangham are confined mainly to three poor settlements of Mylapore named respectively as Ramakrishnapuram, Pallakkumaniam and Puthottam. There are three night schools conducted in these three places all the year round. These night schools are attended by 95 pupils of which 26 are girls. Some of them attend day schools and a few others get general training and training in stitching. A small library of 200 books and the Panchayats as well as a Thrift Society are among the other works of the Sangham for the general welfare of the people. Bhajanas and festivals at stated intervals are conducted, and this has a direct influence over the social life of the people. Through lantern slides and other devices propaganda is also made for spreading ideas of hygiene and sanitation among the poor settlers. In co-operation with the Guild of Service the Sangham members visited the hospital over 50 times for distributing books and magazines to patients and for entertaining them with gramophone songs. Fire relief at Bhimanpet and the extended activities at Kattu Koil Cherries are special items of works done this year. The total number of hours devoted to the service by the members during the year is 2,667. The Sangham hopes to extend its work if more hands and means are forthcoming.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

वाङ्मनोभ्यां शरीरेण शुचिः स्यादनहंकृतः । प्रशान्तो ज्ञानवान् भिक्षुर्निरपेक्षश्चरेत् सुखम् ॥  
यश्चैनं परमं धर्मं सर्वभूतसुखावहं । दुःखान्निःसरणं वेद तत्त्वज्ञः स सुखी भवेत् ॥  
तस्मात् समाहितं बुद्ध्या मनो भूतेषु धारयेत् । नापध्यायेन्नस्पृहयेन्नावदं चिन्तयेदसत् ॥  
अयामोघप्रयत्नेन मनो ज्ञाने निवेशयेत् । सुवाचोऽय प्रयोगेण मनोज्ञं संप्रवर्तते ॥  
कल्कापेतामपरुषामवृणोसामर्षशुनीम् । ईदृगल्पं च वक्तव्यमविक्षिप्तेन चेतसा ॥  
निःसन्दिग्धमनीहो वै मुक्तः सर्वपरिग्रहेः । विविक्तचारी लज्वाशी तपस्वी नियतेन्द्रियः ॥  
ज्ञानदग्धपरिक्लेशः प्रयोगरतिरात्मवान् । निष्पचारेण मनसा परं तदगधिच्छति ॥


A monk shall be pure in body, mind and speech. Untainted by the least trace of egoism, he should conduct himself calmly, wisely and contentedly, without looking for anything to turn up. He who understands this highest way of life, which brings about the happiness of all living beings and opens the door of escape from all misery, shall know the Truth and be happy. He should therefore direct his mind towards all beings, having controlled it by his intellect. Never should he think of evil, never covet nor reflect on anything which does not become his high state or which is not right for him to entertain. And then he should engage his mind in the acquisition of wisdom, devoting himself steadily to this work without frittering away his energies. Words of spiritual import bring about the happiness of all. With a perfectly undistracted mind, he should speak sparingly words that are kind and absolutely free from hypocrisy, cruelty and calumny. Devoid of doubts, free from possessions, living away from the company of the vulgar, abstemious in food, given to an austere life, having the senses controlled, with sins burnt by wisdom, applying himself to spiritual practices, and always self-possessed, the monk becomes endowed with an unwavering mind, and gains the Supreme.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 217. Verses 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20 & 21.

## UNIVERSAL RELIGION—TRUE AND FALSE

[The doctrine of the validity of all religions rests on our conception of the nature of religious truth. In the following paragraphs we have discussed the nature of religious truth from one point of view.]

### I

F all human institutions that claim to embody truth, religion is perhaps the one that has been most persistent and uncompromising in maintaining such a claim. In fact no attack on a religion is resented so seriously as a denial of its truth. That accounts for the ineffectiveness of the hesitant plea put forward by some modern thinkers on behalf of religion, that religion deserves to be preserved as a means for providing man with certain urgent emotional satisfactions, although its central doctrines are without any truth behind them.

But yet, in spite of the vehemence of conviction that religionists have in this respect, it is to be noted that many of the acute thinkers of the world have been very tardy in giving any serious consideration to this conviction. They point out in justification of their attitude that, by their very nature, religious dogmas and religious sects contradict our conception of truth, and that this can be very easily understood if we compare religion with science. Apart from all logical or metaphysical definitions of it, truth, as common sense tells us, presses itself on the attention of all alike, compelling their attention, and as a consequence whatever embodies vital truths gradually overcomes the passions and prejudices of men, and tends to bring about unanimous acceptance of it on their part. This, for example has been the

case with science. It has placed before mankind as a whole, irrespective of time, culture and climate, a body of truths which find acceptance at the hands of all. No doubt, scientists may differ in their opinions in regard to phenomena at the start of their enquiry, but as their investigations proceed and their experiments are perfected, these differences diminish and tend towards a unanimity of view. The same cannot be said of religion; for though the great religions of the world have been flourishing for centuries, the differences in their dogmas and allegiances continue to be as acute as at any time in the past. In spite of the vast strides that the study of comparative religions have made in recent times, except for a sort of unanimity in point of aspiration, it is doubtful whether any one can cull out a set of fundamental doctrines and practices on which all religionists are unanimously agreed. This irreconcilability of the principal tenets of religions is one of the chief reasons that makes them a suspect in the eye of many a deep thinker of to-day who has been brought up in the scientific way of thinking.

But what is still more damaging to the claim of religions to possess any truth at all, is the way in which religions have behaved in the face of their mutual differences. When scientists differ in their views, they take their difference as an indication of the imperfection of their theories, and

therefore experiment and observe more carefully until they arrive at unanimity. But religionists all the world over have, under such circumstances, been noticed to indulge in mutual recrimination, and, if allowed their own way, even burst out into fits of violence leading to bloodshed and forms of cruelties which even animals are incapable of. A thoughtful and cultured mind feels by an instinct as it were that pure truth cannot be where such debasing partisanship is the general order. He looks at science and sees no such hatred and bloodshed indulged in, in its sphere of enquiry after truth. He naturally concludes therefore that concord, harmony and enlightenment form the trail of truth while passion, prejudice and violence indicate the sphere of ignorance.

To those who are convinced of the utility of religion in the life of man, these considerations would seem important in facilitating the religious adjustment that man is seeking to-day. It is sometimes thought that the talk of universal religion is only a pastime of intellectual idlers, having no relation to the everyday religious life of the common man. But the type of criticism referred to above would show the fallacy of such a complacent estimate. It is because the common man has not been led to think deeply on the nature of the religious truth and about the question of its universality that the circumstances favouring the adverse criticisms mentioned before have cropped up. The problem of universal religion is therefore as "live" an issue to-day as that of a World State or that of an equitable distribution of the world's resources among the nations.

## II

There have been two divergent theories of religious universalism. These may be called the Semitic and the Hindu types, according to their origin. The Semitic type is embodied to-day in Christianity and Islam, the two pre-eminently Semitic religions. The religious universalism it upholds is patterned after the universalism of mathematics, tinged with a sense of history. In mathematics the proposition that two and two make four is the same for all. In the same way the truths of religion, and the way of salvation upheld by it, must be the same for all, and as a consequence those who accept that truth and that way alone could possibly gain salvation, while the rest must necessarily be doomed to perdition. Christianity would also maintain that the way of salvation has a historical reference. It traces man's spiritual degeneracy or sinful state to the disobedience of the Divine commandment by his first parents. This original sin has, as it were, been inherited by their progeny, and man can get rid of it only by faith in the atoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. It is easy to see that, if the historical events referred to in this doctrine and their relation to man's salvation were inexorable like natural laws, applicable to all humanity, then the religion embodying them is the only true religion, even in a mathematical sense.

Although a doctrine of this type has an appeal to the naive mind because of its definiteness and its appeal to the mathematical sense, yet every thoughtful person feels there is something amiss with it. In the first place, in spite of its pretentious mathematical setting, the conviction a religion

of this type carries is not in any way compelling, except on those who are emotionally open to its suggestive influence. It is this fact that has necessitated the use of either violence or of questionable forms of propaganda to spread the so-called truths of this type, which is never done in the case of scientific truths.

Next, being historical events, their occurrence is always liable to doubts, and even if accepted, they can be interpreted in ways quite different from what the pious mind conceives them to be. And what is more interesting, unorthodox interpretations of the so-called universal dogmas have been given not always by hostile free-thinkers, but by sections of the very pious folk themselves who accept their spiritual significance. In fact every sect, into which the so-called universal religions have split, has its origin in a difference in interpretation of fundamental doctrines. Thus the abundance of the sects, and the horror of heresy and non-conformity so common among the so-called universal religions, is the best refutation of any theory of universalism got up by throwing the cloak of mathematics over purely historical events or documents. Therefore, to a thoughtful mind, nothing more is required than these facts to be convinced that there is some serious flaw in this notion of religious universalism—nay, a very serious psychological misapprehension of the very nature of truth embodied in religion.

### III

The alternative conception of religious universalism, which has grown out of the Hindu religious consciousness, maintains that every religion is true and is a path to salvation. The

difference between this and the view discussed till now is very striking, and but for the defects of the former pointed out above, this view might even appear absurd to a mind that is confirmed in a mathematical conception of religious truth. A deeper consideration of the nature of religious truth will, however, show that this is the only sound view of universalism in religion.

When we analyse religions, we find that they consist of systems of philosophy, mythology and ritual devised for giving man an inner experience, and a general attitude towards life on the basis of that experience. In other words, religious ideas and practices partake of the nature of symbols, and are therefore true, not so much in what they are, as in their power to evoke in the mind certain experiences that are fundamental to life.

In this respect they stand in striking contrast to mathematical truths, and reveal their resemblance to aesthetics. The significance of a mathematical proposition is confined to itself; it is not symbolic in this higher sense. The proposition, 'two and two make four' means just that much, and nothing more. It has no deeper suggestion to convey, and it yields no self-transcendent meaning by any further interpretative activity of the mind.

In aesthetic experience, on the other hand, it will be readily perceived how the thoughts, words, marks and other external factors through which one mind communicates with another mind, are all largely symbolic, and depend for effect on their suggestiveness, on their power to evoke in the mind a particular type of interpretative activity and the patterns of experience that accompany it.

That is why aesthetic devices very often become standardised into conventions, and a full appreciation of any system of fine arts pre-supposes on the part of the connoisseur an insight into these conventions, and a full and unreserved openness to their suggestive influence.

This will be very easily seen in the case of music, one of the most popular branches of fine arts. To many Indians, European music appears to be something bizarre, and some of them may even be puzzled to know that human beings derive delight from it. The same will be the case when Europeans hear Indian music. In India itself it is common to come across persons, even among trained musicians, who fail to appreciate the beauties of musical systems prevailing in different parts of the country. In all these cases, especially where there is vast tradition with the works of master minds at the back, the difficulty in appreciation can be explained only on the hypothesis that music consists of systems of sound symbols, and that its appreciation depends largely on one's being educated into the significance of these symbols. By gradually accustoming oneself to the sound symbols, and opening oneself to their suggestive influence, one can learn to appreciate what was difficult for one to do before.

From this example of music what becomes plain is that, where experiences are conveyed through symbols, there can be unity in the experiences realised in spite of the variation in the stimulating symbols, and that therefore any prejudice which one may possibly have against an alien system of music must be entirely attributed to a total misapprehension of

the way in which musical symbols work on the human mind.

Let us now apply this idea to the question of religious universalism and see whether it helps us to understand the Hindu ideal of the validity of all religions. It must be borne in mind that the main function of religion is not to give us an exact description of the topography of heaven, of the number of inhabitants in the nether worlds and other such pieces of information which people curious about things occult are generally after. Its main purpose is to rouse in us a sense of a holy and intelligent will or purpose behind the cosmos which at first sight seems apparently to be governed by mechanical forces, to create an attitude of complete surrender of our little self to this larger whole, and thereby establish in the heart of man a vivid and unyielding experience of harmony, peace, purity, joy, enlightenment and fearlessness. Different religions may have divergent creeds and philosophies, mythologies and rituals, and yet they can all be accepted as embodying vital truths, if we would consider religion from this point of view. For every religion then becomes a harmonious and mutually adapted collection of symbols—intellectual, mythological and ritualistic—with the ultimate aim, not of imparting information, but of awakening in man, in a vivid form, the attitude and experience described before. The symbols used for this purpose may differ. The dogmas, rituals and other items in the theologies of different religions may vary widely and may not even be mutually understandable to a large extent. Yet the religious experience they bring can be the same, even as the aesthetic delight derived from different systems of



music is the same. On the other hand, to look upon different religious creeds and theological conceptions as primarily meant to convey exact information to us would be as absurd as evaluating a musical composition by the meaning of the words used in it. In other words to stand unbudging in defence of a dogma and its exclusive truth, or to insist on any purely objective efficacy in religious rituals, would be the best way of defeating their very purpose. For in the first place we would be reducing them to the position of scientific propositions, demanding proofs of the same nature as all scientific propositions, which it would be impossible to give in their case. And in the second place their exclusive claims would nullify themselves when it is seen that similar inner experiences and attitudes are reached by following dogmas and rituals of an entirely different nature. The only rational position, therefore, will be to hold that every theology is nothing more than a symbol evolved by the cultural genius of people for evoking certain basic experiences in men who are able to enter into their spirit, and that all these symbols are true in the sense that they lead to those experiences.

#### IV

To illustrate the symbolic nature of religious doctrines let us take a few concrete examples. As we have already said, a symbol has an appeal only to a person who enters into the spirit of its symbology. Thus the picture of Christ on the Cross has played a very important part in the religious experience of the Christian, but one need not wonder if a Hindu or a Buddhist, who depends on his own effort for salvation, turns round and

asks the Christian how he can expect one, who could not save himself from his enemies, to save others. So also the Hindu has for ages dwelt on the personality of Sri Krishna, and found in him the highest manifestation of the Divinity, but an orthodox Christian finds in him only the most debasing character in the world's religious literature. In the figure of Kali, nude and decorated with a garland of severed heads, the Shakta devotee finds the mystery of the Deity revealed, but a pious Vaishnava is horrified at it, and can discover all that significance only in the beautiful form of Krishna with flute in hand and adorned with wreaths of flowers. In the images worshipped in the great temples of India, the Hindu devotees catch a glimpse of the Divine and feel the highest spiritual exaltation, but a Muslim iconoclast would not only feel no such inspiration before them, but would only be inclined to smash them to pieces. The Kaaba is, for the Muslim, an object of great religious significance, but for the Hindu or Christian it is only a black stone, and if he is sufficiently modern, he would recognise in its adoration a relic of phallus worship. The Muslim theologian goes into ecstasies over the inspiring effect of the Quran, but for many non-Muslims the study of it is valuable only as an education in patience—an enterprise which he would not complete except for a strong sense of duty.

In the examples cited above we have included only some of the more concrete types of religious symbols, but it requires no great effort of intelligence to perceive that, even in the case of the more abstract teachings of religions, the same symbolic conception holds good. That is why doc-

trines that look so profound and inspiring to their respective followers like those of Nirguna Brahman of Vedanta, the Trinity of the Christians, the Sunya of the Buddhists, the Allah of the Muslims and so on, have called forth only criticism or scorn from the ardently pious folk of other religions. For so long as people are obsessed with the idea that the definitions and descriptions of religious truths are on a par with those of exact sciences, in other words, so long as they carry the purely material idea of fixed boundaries into the realm of the spirit, they are bound to extend to it also the notion of logical contradictions which is born of a hard sense of the boundaries of things. And so long as men think in terms of contradictions, which is no doubt an excellent way of thought for material sciences, but the least useful and illuminating in the spiritual field—so long they would speak of one set of religious doctrines as true and the others as false, and delay the era of universalism in religion indefinitely.

The alternative way of thinking is the symbolical interpretation of religious conceptions. In that case there is no question of contradictions, and of one religion alone being true and the others false. For diametrically opposed symbols may evoke identical experiences and attitudes, according as the symbol is accepted and responded to in the right spirit. Hence in spite of our incapacity to be inspired by the religious symbols of another culture, it becomes possible to accept their validity, if we would but agree to the symbolical character of all religious doctrines.

### V

In the modern age, Sri Ramakrishna is perhaps the only example

of a person who could not only mould his thought in the light of this great idea, but actually live the life of different cults, and experience how their different disciplines and modes of thought, in spite of their divergences, take one to an identical realisation. Hence he could say with full conviction — As many religions so many paths. And when he did so, he had in mind not only the great religions that pass to be respectable, but even cults which are criticised as of questionable moral standard. He used to call the latter as the scavenger's door-way to a mansion, and the former the gate proper leading to it. Both lead to the same mansion, he would say, but respectable people would not enter through the scavenger's gate. Again some ardent moralists used to find fault with certain people of great spiritual attainments, because some of the disciplines they followed seemed to violate the conventional rules of morality. To them Sri Ramakrishna used to reply always, "They are not to be blamed for that. For they had the thorough conviction that the paths they followed in themselves led to God-realisation. Whatever is ardently believed in, and adopted as a means to God-realisation, should not be found fault with. No aspirant's attitude should be condemned, since any attitude, if sincerely followed, is sure to lead to God, who is the consummation of them all. Go on calling upon Him, each in his own way, and don't find fault with another's path, or take that as your own."

Here in this saying is a great lesson in universal religion.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. From this instalment we commence the translation of the second volume of the reminiscences. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the original from Bengali.]

**U**NCLE Baroda\* said to me, "The Mother has sent for you."

I went inside the inner apartments and found the Holy Mother standing at the door of her room waiting for me. As I saluted her, she asked, "Where do you come from?" I told her the name of the District of my native village.

Mother: I suppose you are now reading the teachings of the Master.

I did not make any reply to these words. She spoke to me as if we had known each other for a long time. I still remember her tender and affectionate look.

Mother: Do you belong to the Kayastha caste?

Disciple: Yes.

Mother: How many brothers have you?

Disciple: Four.

Mother: Sit down and take some refreshments.

With these words the Mother spread a small carpet on the floor of the varandah and gave me some *Luchi* and sweets that had been

offered in the shrine on the previous night.

I had walked all the way from Tarakeswar on the previous day, spending the night in the village of Deshra, to the northwest of Jayrambati, in the house of a young man whom I had met at the railway station of Haripal. The Mother listened to all this and said to me after I had finished my refreshments, "Don't bathe now; you have walked a great deal." Then she gave me a betel-leaf to chew.

She sent for me again after the noon-day worship and offerings were over, and, first of all, served me with food. She gave me the food with her own hands, on a *shal-leaf*, in the porch of her room. "Eat well, and remember, don't feel shy!" she said to me as I was enjoying the meal. Afterwards she gave me a betel-leaf.

I went to the Holy Mother again at three or four o'clock in the afternoon and found her kneading dough for bread. She was seated on the floor, facing the east, her legs stretched out in front of her. The oven stood near her. Casting a benign glance upon me, she said, "What do you want?"

Disciple: I want to talk to you.

\* Uncle Baroda—The brother of Holy Mother.

Mother: What do you want to talk about? Sit down here.

She gave me a seat.

Disciple: Mother! People say that our Master is God Eternal and Absolute; what do you say?

Mother: Yes, he is God Eternal and Absolute *to me*.

As she had said '*to me*' I went on, "It is true that to every woman her husband is God Eternal and Absolute. I am not asking the question in that sense."

Mother: Yes, he is God Eternal and Absolute to me as my husband; and in a general way as well.

Then I thought that if Sri Ramakrishna were God Eternal, then she (the Holy Mother) must be the Divine Power, the Mother of the Universe. She must be identical with her divine consort, Sri Ramakrishna--like Rama and Sita, Radha and Krishna. I had come to the Holy Mother cherishing this faith in my heart. I asked her, "If that be the case, then why do we see you preparing bread like an ordinary woman? It is Maya, I suppose, is it not?"

Mother: It is Maya, indeed. Otherwise, why should I fall into such a state? I would rather have lived in *Vaikuntha*<sup>1</sup>, like *Lakshmi*<sup>2</sup>, by the side of Narayana.

"But," she added, "God loves to sport in a human being. Sri Krishna was born as a cowherd-boy and Rama as the child of Dasaratha."

Disciple: Do you ever remember your real nature?

<sup>1</sup>*Vaikuntha*—A name of Heaven in the Hindu religion.

<sup>2</sup>*Lakshmi*—The Divine consort of Narayana, the Supreme God.

Mother: Yes, I recall it now and then. At that time I say to myself, "What is this that I am doing! What is all this about?" Then I remember the house, buildings and children (pointing with the palm of her hand to the houses) and forget my real self.

I used to visit the Mother almost daily in her room. She would lie down on her bed and talk to me, Radha lying asleep by her side. An oil-lamp would cast a dim light in the room. On some of the days a maid-servant rubbed her feet with medicinal oil for her rheumatism.

One day she said to me in the course of conversation, "Whenever the thought of a disciple comes to my mind and I yearn to see him, then either he comes here or writes a letter to me. You must have come here prompted by a certain feeling. Perhaps you have in your mind the thought of the Divine Mother of the Universe."

Disciple: Are you the Mother of all?

Mother: Yes.

Disciple: Even of these sub-human beings, birds and animals?

Mother: Yes, of these also.

Disciple: Then why should they suffer so much?

Mother: In this birth they must have these experiences.

One evening I had the following conversation with the Holy Mother, in her room.

Mother: That you all have come to me is because you are my own.

Disciple: Am I your own?

Mother: Yes, my own. Is there any doubt about it? If a man is the very own of another, they remain

inseparable in the successive cycles of time.

After some more talks the Holy Mother said, "Yes, we shall meet again in subtle bodies." I understood from her words that we would meet again after death.

Disciple: I wanted to come to you here last *Aswin*<sup>1</sup>, and spent the whole night at the Howrah Railway Station. I was at the station till eleven o'clock the next morning, but I could not buy the railroad ticket. The clerks at the station were carrying on a strike in connection with the nationalist agitation. The activities of the station were, therefore, stopped. Then a clerk, an English woman, opened the booking office, and passengers rushed to the window. As it was the time of the *Puja*<sup>2</sup> holidays, it looked as if the people would break each other's heads. I could not purchase the ticket and returned to my place of residence in Calcutta. Later on I learnt by letter that one of my brothers was seriously ill, and so I returned home. My desire to see you could not be fulfilled.

Mother: One must have all the facilities; then alone he can visit me.

Disciple: All address you as *Apani*<sup>3</sup> but I cannot do so. I cannot utter that word. I address you as *Tumi*.

Mother: That is good, indeed. It denotes an intimate relationship.

<sup>1</sup>*Aswin*—A month in Bengali Calendar.

<sup>2</sup>*Puja*—The worship of the Divine Mother (The Durga Puja).

<sup>3</sup>*Apani*—There are three words in Bengali by which one can address another. ..*Apani* is used when one addresses his superior entitled to respect. *Tumi* is used to address an equal and is a term of intimacy and endearment. *Tui* is used to address the inferior, the servants, etc.

In the course of our talk I said to her, "You must have taken the responsibilities of those whom you have initiated with the sacred *Mantra*. Then why do you say when we request you for the fulfilment of a desire, 'I will speak to the Master about it.' Can't *you* take our responsibility?"

Mother: I have, indeed, taken your responsibility.

Disciples: Please bless me, O Mother, that I may have purity of mind and attachment to God. Mother, I had a class-mate in school. I would be grateful if I could bestow upon Sri Ramakrishna a fourth of the love which I cherished for my chum.

Mother: Ah me! That is true, indeed! Well, I shall speak to the Master about it.

Disciple: Why do you only say that you will speak to the Master? Are you different from Him? My desire will certainly be fulfilled by your blessings alone.

Mother: My child! If you can get perfect knowledge through my blessings, then I bless you with all my heart and soul. Is it ever possible for a man to free himself unaided from the clutches of *Maya*? It was for this that the Master performed spiritual austerities to the greatest extent and gave the results thereof for the redemption of mankind.

Disciple: How can one love Sri Ramakrishna without seeing him?

Mother: Yes, that's true. Can one ever have intimate friendship with mere air!

Disciple: When shall I have the vision of the Master?

Mother: You shall certainly see him. You shall see the Master at the right time.

# THOU ART THAT

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the Head of the Vedanta Centre of Hollywood, U.S.A. The present article is a section from his forthcoming book on "Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Gita," written under the editorial supervision of Dr. P. H. Houston, Professor in the Occidental College, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.]

**B**RAHMAN and *Atman*—these two words, as it were, are "the two pillars on which rests the whole edifice of Indian philosophy." They are respectively, the objective and subjective views of the reality behind the world of appearances, which is the constant theme of these early religious writings. *Brahman* was the name given by the *Rishis* to the unchanging reality in the external universe.

The word *Atman* signifies the Self in man, the Self not limited in himself. "Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great, this *Atman* dwells in the hearts of all," says the *Katha Upanishad*; "as fire, being one, assumes different forms according to what it burns, so the *Atman*, existing in all, though one, assumes different forms according to whatever it enters. It also exists without."

*Brahman* and *Atman*, and indeed the whole teaching of the *Upanishads*, are revealed with a fair degree of completeness in the Great Sayings or the *Mahavakyas*, such as *Tattvam asi*—Thou art That; *Aham Brahmasmi*—I am Brahman; *Sohamasmi*—I am He; and so forth.

There is preserved in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, a dialogue between a certain Uddalaka and his son, Svetaketu, which helps to make clear the meaning and implication of the Great Saying, *Tattvam asi* 'Thou art That'.

When Svetaketu was twelve years old, so runs the tale, his father Uddalaka said to him, 'Svetaketu, you must now go to school to study. None of our family, darling, is ignorant of *Brahman*.' Thereupon Svetaketu went to a teacher and studied for twelve years. Then, after learning all the *Vedas*, he returned home and was full of pride for his learning. His father, noticing boy's conceit, asked him: 'Svetaketu, my child, have you asked for that knowledge by which we hear the unheard, by which we perceive the unperceivable, by which we know the unknowable?' 'What is that knowledge, sir?' asked Svetaketu. The father replied: 'My dear, as by knowing one lump of clay, all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only in name, and the truth being that all is clay; as by knowing a nugget of gold, all that is made of gold is known, the difference being only in name, and the truth being that all is gold; so, my child, is that knowledge, knowing which we know everything.' The son replied: 'Surely those venerable teachers of mine do not know this knowledge, for if they had known of it, they would have taught it to me. Do you, sir, therefore, impart that knowledge to me.' 'Be it so,' said the father. 'Believe it, my child. That which is the subtle essence, in That has all its existence. That is the true. That is the Self;

and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.' 'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self,' said the son. 'So be it, my child,' said the father. 'Put this salt in water, and come to me tomorrow morning.' The son did as he was told.

The next morning the father asked the boy to bring him the salt which he had put into the water. But he could not, for it had dissolved. The father said, 'Sip the water and tell me how it tastes.' 'It is salty, sir,' replied the son. Then the father said, 'In the same way, though you do not perceive the True, That is indeed there. That which is the subtle essence, in That all this has its existence. That is the True; That is the Self; and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.'

'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.' 'So be it, my child. As a bee, O Svetaketu, gathers honey from different flowers, and as the different honeys do not know that they are from different flowers, so all of us, having come to that existence, know not that we have done so. And as the rivers, when they join the ocean, do not know that they have been various rivers, even so when we come out of that existence, we do not know that we are That. Now that which is that subtle essence, in It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art That.'

'Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.' 'So be it, my child. As a person may be blindfolded and led away from his home and left in a strange place; and as he would turn in every direction and cry for someone to remove his bandages, and show him the way home; and as someone might loose the bandages and show him the way; and as thereupon he would

walk, asking his way from village to village as he went, and arrive at his home at last; in exactly the same manner does a man who meets a teacher with knowledge, obtain the true knowledge.

'That which is the subtle essence, in That has all this its existence. That is the True, That is the Self; and Thou art That, O Svetaketu.'

In this dialogue between Uddalaka and his son, Svetaketu, we learn, "That which is the subtle essence, in That all this has its existence, and That which is *Sat*—Existence itself—That thou art." This, then, is the fundamental truth of the philosophy of the *Upanishads*—the identity between *Brahman* and *Atman*, between God and man. To a superficial reader, this identification may lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations, that is, unless we resolve to penetrate deep into the mystery of man's soul. The *Upanishads* give us that profounder analysis of the essential nature of man which the people of the Western world seem to have missed, and they also afford the explanation of the unity and identity between God and man.

Man, according to this account of his nature, in the form in which he is known to his fellows, is called *Jiva*, *he who breathes*, denoting the biological and physiological aspects of his life. His individual self is further indicated by the words, *Bhokta*, or the experiencer, the enjoyer, and *Karta*, or the doer. "For he it is who sees, hears, smells, tastes, perceives, conceives, acts, he whose essence is knowledge, the person who dwells in the highest indestructible Self."\*

\**Prasna Upanishad*.

Again, "When the Self is in union with the body, the senses, and the mind, then wise people call him the Enjoyer."<sup>†</sup>

These quotations have reference to the psychological or conscious aspect of life. So man is the Self associated with *Prana*, the vital principle, that which expresses itself as breath, and *Manas*, which comprises mind, intelligence, ego; and in addition there are the physical body and the organs of the senses. These *Indriyas*, or sense organs, are, according to the *Upanishads*, ten in number, five known as the senses of knowledge, i.e., the organs of sight, hearing, touch, smell and flavour (taste); and five senses of action, namely, the organs of speech, holding, moving, excretion and generation.

Says the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, in its detailed analysis of man:

"This Self is covered over by sheaths, as it were. First is the physical sheath, this body, which is made up of the essence of food. Therefore it is called *Annamaya* or composed of food. Different from this is another more subtle sheath of the Self, which is made of *Prana*, the life principle. Like the shape of the former is the human shape of the latter, even as water assuming the shape of the vessel into which it is poured. It is known as *Pranamaya* in as much as it is constituted of *Prana*, which manifests as energy. Different from this is the *Manomaya* sheath, which is made up of *Manas*, mind. It, also, is like unto the shape of the man. Different from this, which is made up of *Manas*, is the other sheath, which is made up of *Vijnana*, or intelligence.

As different from this is the other, which is made up of ego. It is called *Anandamaya*, the sheath of bliss, for it is the innermost covering of the blissful Self."

These sheaths cover the Self. Since the true Self is one with *Brahman*, it can be none of these sheaths, nor can its nature be known so long as it is identified in our consciousness with one or all of them. "Know the body," says the *Katha Upanishad*, "to be the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, the mind the reins, and the *Atman* the Lord in the chariot."

But what proof have we of an *Atman* distinct from the mind, the intelligence, the ego, and the body? Western philosophy declares mind and soul to be identical, with nothing existing behind the mind and the ego. But in the *Upanishads* this something behind the changing forms of our lives is declared to exist, and no need is felt for proofs of any sort. For the Self is the basis of all proofs, and so stands in need of none. "By which one knows all this, whereby could one know that? By what means could the knower be known?"\*

All this, of course, is not tantamount to agnosticism. We find again and again the injunction to "know thyself", to seek to "know the knower," to seek to "know not the object seen, but the seer of objects".

The fact is that the existence of the *Atman* is self-evident, since it is the "eternal witness, eternal subject, unchangeable reality" in man. There is indeed a logical proof involved in the utterances of these seers, which has been brought to light by later philosophers. It is very simple. To

<sup>†</sup>*Katha Upanishad.*

\**Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*



know motion or change, one must know it in relation to something that is less in motion. That less motion, in turn, must be known in relation to lesser motion, *ad infinitum*, until one arrives at something which is not motion, which is unchangeable. Body, mind, everything we know, is a series of changes. There must, therefore, be something beyond them which does not change. Moreover, the subject, the witness, cannot be the object seen or cognized; and our minds, egos, senses, bodies, etc., as the instruments of knowledge are the objects cognized. They cannot, therefore, be the subject, the witness. So there must be a separate something, the *Atman*, which is the eternal witness, the eternal subject.

When the *Atman* identifies itself with the sheaths, it appears as *Jiva*, an individual man. How this identification has come about is an interesting problem in later philosophies. The *Upanishads* declare that *Jivahood* has been effected by the forgetfulness of the *Atman*, and the loss of its essential identity with *Brahman*. Sankara, in the introduction to his commentary on the *Vedanta* aphorisms, considers the problem of how the *Atman* identifies itself with its sheaths, the non-self. This is caused by *Avidya*, or ignorance. He points out that the subject is the Self, whose nature is intelligence, and the object is the non-Self. They are opposed to each other as darkness is to light, and so cannot be identified, much less their respective attributes. And it is wrong to superimpose upon the subject, the object or its attributes. Yet, through some unexplainable cause which has its root in ignorance, man, from a beginningless past, fails to distinguish between the two and their

respective attributes, although they are absolutely distinct, and would "superimpose upon each the characteristic nature and the attributes of the other, thus coupling the real and the unreal. Extra-personal attributes are superimposed on the Self, if a man considers himself sound and entire, or the contrary, as long as his wife, children, and so on, are sound and entire, or not. Attributes of the body are superimposed on the Self if a man thinks of himself as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking or jumping; attributes of the sense organs, if he thinks, 'I am mute, or deaf, or one-eyed, or blind'; attributes of the internal organs, when he considers himself subject to desire, intention, doubt, determination, and so on. In this way there goes on this natural beginning – and endless super-imposition, which appears in the form of wrong conception, is the cause of individual souls appearing as agents and enjoyers (the results of their actions), and is observed by everyone."\*

In this connection, Swami Vivekananda relates an interesting story. "There was once a baby lion left by its dying mother among some sheep. The sheep fed it and gave it shelter. The lion grew apace and said 'Ba-a-a' when the sheep said 'Ba-a-a'. One day another lion came by. 'What do you do here?' said the second lion, in astonishment, for he heard the sheep-lion bleating with the rest. 'Ba-a-a,' said the other, 'I am a little sheep, I am a little sheep, I am frightened.' 'Nonsense!' roared the second lion. 'Come with me; I will show you your true nature!' And he took him to the side of a smooth stream and showed him his own image therein.

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\*Translated by G. Thibaut.

'You are a lion; look at me, look at the sheep, look at yourself.' And the sheep-lion looked, and then he said, 'Ba—I do not look like the sheep—it is true, I am a lion!' and with that he roared that the hills shook to their depths. That is it. We are lions in sheeps' clothing of habit, we are hypnotized into weakness by our surroundings, and the province of *Vedanta* is the de-hypnotization of the Self."

A beautiful allegory is related in the *Mundaka Upanishad* to illustrate this point. "The *Jivatman* (the individual man) and the *Paramatman* (the universal Self), like two birds of beautiful golden plumage, who are inseparable companions, are perched on the branches of the self-same tree. Of those the one (the individual man) tastes of the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree, and the other (the universal Self) remains immobile, calmly observing. Though living in the self-same tree, the individual man, deluded by the forgetfulness of his divine nature, grieves, bewildered by his own helplessness. And when the same man recognizes his own Soul—the true Self—the worshipful Lord, and beholds His glory, he becomes free from all grief. Thus, as he realizes the self-luminous Lord, the Cause of all causes, he becomes purged of all impurities and realizes his identity with the Universal Self."

In the *Cchhandogya Upanishad* the problem of the essential nature of man, his true self, is reflected in the tale of Indra and Virochana, who approached the teacher Prajapati to learn of him the knowledge of the Self. Prajapati commences his instruction with an indication of the nature of the Self. "That Self which is free

from impurities, free from old age or death, from hunger or thirst, whose desire is true and whose desires come true, that Self is to be sought for, that Self is to be enquired about and realized. He who, learning about his Self, realizes Him, obtains all the world and all desire."

Students of logic may condemn this easy assumption of the existence of the Self as self-evident and true, on the ground that what is to be proved is taken for granted. A little deeper reflection on the subject, however, will reveal the fact that all this is not so illogical after all. We have already seen how logically we must accept the existence of an unchanging reality. By the nature of its unchangeability it is free from impurities, old age, and death, which are attributes of the mind and the body, but cannot be of the Self. So the Self itself must be not only unchangeable, but pure, free, and immortal.

Now in the story we are told that Indra from among the *Devas* or Gods, and Virochana from among the *Asuras* or demons, approached Prajapati, and after having served him for years, begged him to teach them the knowledge of the Self. Prajapati, replied to them: "The person that is seen in the eyes, that is the Self. That is immortal. That is fearless and That is Brahman." Then they asked, "Sir, is he the self, who is seen reflected in the water or in a mirror?" Prajapati replied clearly that they might inquire further. Prajapati said, "He, indeed, is seen in all these. Look at your self in the water, and whatever you do not understand, come and tell me."

They looked at their reflections in water, and when asked what they had

seen of the Self, they replied, "Sir, we see the Self, we see even the hair and the nails." Then Prajapati bade them don their finest clothes and look again at themselves in the water. This they did, and when asked what they had seen, they replied, "We see the Self, just as we are, well adorned and in our finest clothes." Prajapati said then, "The self indeed is seen in these; That Self is immortal, fearless, and That is Brahman."

And they went away, pleased at heart. But Prajapati, looking after them, said "Both of them departed without analysing or discriminating, and without comprehending the true Self. And whoever will follow this false doctrine of the Self will perish."

Now Virochana, satisfied that he had known the Self, returned to the *Asuras* and preached the doctrine of the body as Self. But Indra, on his way back, realized the uselessness of this knowledge. So he thought within himself, "As this Self seems to be well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, so will this Self be blind if the body is blind, lame, if the body is lame, deformed, if the body is deformed; in fact, the Self also will die when the body perishes. I see no good in such knowledge." So he returned to Prajapati and asked for further instruction. Prajapati said, "He who moves about in dreams, enjoying and glorified, he is the Self. That is immortal, fearless, and That is Brahman."

Pleased at heart, Indra again departed. But before he had returned to the *Devas*, he realised also the uselessness of that knowledge. Then he thought within himself, "True it is that this Self is not blind if the body

is blind, nor lame, nor hurt if the body is lame or hurt, but in dreams too, this Self is conscious of many sufferings. So I see no good in this teaching."

So Prajapati took his disciple step by step through the long process of thinking for himself. From the realization that the body cannot be the free, immortal unchanging Self, Indra turned to analyse the dreaming Self. For in dreams we attain to a purer state of mind, in that it experiences objects through means other than the body and the senses. In a way the dream self is above the physical self. But the disciple soon discovered that this also could not be the true Self. And he again approached Prajapati with a request for further instruction. Prajapati replied, "When a person is asleep, reposing and at perfect rest, dreams no dreams, that is the Self, That is immortal and fearless, and That is Brahman." Satisfied, Indra went away. But even before he had reached home, he found the flaw in this knowledge. "In reality," thought he, "he then does not know himself as, This is I, while asleep. He does not, in fact, know any existence. That is almost annihilation. I see no good in this knowledge either."

Sir S. Radhakrishnan comments on this statement thus: "Indra was too much of a psychologist for Prajapati. He felt that this Self, freed from all bodily experience, from the shapeless mass of dreams, etc., is an objectless and barren fiction. Peel off layer after layer of an onion, and what remains? Nothing. Bradley points out: 'The ego that pretends to be anything either before or beyond its concrete psychical filling is a gross fiction and a mere monster,

and for no purpose admissible.' On this view, in dreamless sleep there is no self at all. Locke declares that every drowsy nod explodes the self theory. 'In sleep and trances the mind exists not—there is no time, no succession of ideas. To say the mind exists without thinking is a contradiction.' (Berkeley's Works, Vol. 1, p. 34). Indra seems to have been an empiricist ages before Locke and Berkeley. 'If the soul in a perfectly dreamless sleep thinks, feels and wills nothing, is the soul then at all, and if it is, how is it?' asks Locke. 'How often has the answer been given, that if this could happen, the soul would have no being? Why have we not the courage to say that as often as this happens the soul is not?' Indra has the courage to declare it. It is indeed destroyed.\*

To explain to Indra that the mind is not the Self, because the Self continues to exist without the mind, Prajapati wished his disciple to analyse the state of deep sleep. And Indra, who had identified the mind with the Self through ignorance, discovered that he had not known the Self—for mind is "almost annihilated" in dreamless sleep, a conclusion like unto that of Western rationalists like Bradley, Locke and Berkeley. But these philosophers failed to inquire further, remaining satisfied with their conclusion—"To say that the mind exists without thinking is a contradiction, nonsense, nothing."

Indra became so dissatisfied that he sought to know the Self beyond the mind. For though the mind exists not in deep sleep, being contentless and objectless, there must continue to exist something which holds our experience before and after sleep. This something is the unchangeable reality—the Self. Dr. Radhakrishnan rightly remarks, however, "Devadatta, after good sleep, continues to be Devadatta, since his experiences unite themselves to the system which existed at the time when he went to sleep. They link themselves to his thoughts and do not fly to any other's. This continuity of experience requires us to admit a permanent self underlying all contents of consciousness."

Indra approached his teacher Prajapati once more and asked to be taught. And this time Prajapati gave him the highest truth of the Self. He said, "This body is mortal, always gripped by death. But herein resides the immortal Self, formless. This Self, when associated in consciousness with the body (the different sheaths), becomes subject to pleasure and pain. As long as there is the association with the body, no one is free from the dual throng of pleasure and pain. But as one becomes free from this association and body consciousness, no pleasure or pain can touch or affect the Self. Rising above physical consciousness and knowing the Self as distinct from the senses or sense organs, or the mind, knowing Him in His true light, one rejoices and is free." "He who knows that Self and meditates and realises this Self, obtains all worlds and all desires."

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\*The Philosophy of the Upanishads by S. Radhakrishnan, pp. 31-2.

# THOUGHT

*By Prof. Nicholas Roerich*

[With the help of scientific data Prof. Roerich establishes how thought is a much more potent force than ordinary man supposes.]

**G**OETHE once said to Eckermann: "Despite my name, I have not acquired the right to say what I really think: I must keep silent—not to disturb people. Yet I have a slight privilege. I know what people think, but they do not know what I think...."

The science of thought at present especially occupies the minds of people. From ancient times there resound commandments about this blessed energy. India is rich with such ordainments. Plato and Confucius and many wise men of various epochs persistently turned the attention of people to the great might which is accessible to all. But in the rush of materialism this panacea was sometimes neglected. Hence it is significant that our age can inscribe upon its seal: "Thought is the law of the universe."

The names of Professor Bekhterv, Rhine, McDougall and other eminent scholars who investigate the energy of thought, shall for ever remain on pages of honour in the history of culture.

Let us record the following remarkable research:

"Two Professors of the Cambridge University have succeeded in making cinema photographs of human thought. One of them is Dr. Adrian, Professor of Physiology and a distinguished member of the Royal Society, the other is Prof. Mathews. Adrian, who had dedicated his whole life to the investigation of the mys-

teries of the nervous system, in 1932 received the Noble Prize and only a few days back was awarded the golden medal of the Royal Society."

"When a person sits quietly in a chair with closed eyes, and his thought is not occupied with anything serious, then his brain matter produces regular electrical discharges at the rate of about ten discharges per second. With the help of very complicated and ingenious apparatus and a photo-electric camera, Prof. Adrian succeeded in registering these discharges on a cinema film. He likewise observed that as soon as his patient opens his eyes and begins to concentrate his attention on something, the frequency of the electrical discharges increases considerably and reaches usually about 2000 per second."

"The rhythmic impulses continue also during deep sleep and also when the person (or animal) is subjected to the influence of narcotics. The professor proved by experimental methods the similarity of vibrations in different persons at the sight of the same object or manifestation. Different thoughts, which arise as a consequence of the action of the visual nerves, give different impressions upon the film."

"Prof. Adrian confined his experiments mainly to that part of the human brain which controls vision. He proved that this region of the brain is extra-ordinarily small. And in general Prof. Adrian established the

fact with the help of his apparatus, that the greater part of the human brain does not participate in any mental process."

"Prof. Adrian carried his experiments to such a degree of perfection that he can now easily change his photographic records of thought into sound and can broadcast it over the radio for the public. During a public demonstration the audience heard a great variety of sounds, varying with the visual impressions of the patient, who sat upon the stage and opened his eyes at the direction of the professor".

Thus something quite natural and perhaps long ago known is being recorded already by crude mechanical apparatus. Long before these mechanical records were achieved, the great Indian scientist, Sir Jagadish Bose, in similar experiments recorded the pulse of plants, and demonstrated even for a casual observer how plants react to pain, light, etc., and how the appearance of even a distant cloud react upon the pulse. Graphically he showed on a screen the agony of a plant's death, poisoned or transfixed. At the same time, he recorded the influence of human energy upon the life of the same plants, which, not long ago, were in the eyes of civilised people regarded to be but mere lower growths, devoid of any senses.

By the movement of the needle, which records the pulse of the plant, one can notice the influence of human energy of thought. A kind thought, a sympathetic thought, could protect the plant from the action of poison. In the same degree a hostile thought would increase the fatal action.

If only the realisation of the importance and power of thought would penetrate quickly into the minds of even uneducated masses! It is ridiculous and humiliating to subject the lofty experiments upon human thought to the action of coarse mechanical apparatus. But for a coarse consciousness similar methods of investigation are necessary. The realisation alone of the significance of thought would considerably transform our earthly existence.

In the realm of television, purely mechanical improvements of importance have taken place. It has just been reported that during the current year this transmission of vision on a distance will receive new possibilities. This is quite possible since once the field has been entered, the result in this direction will no doubt accumulate shortly. Gradually the reflection of the quality of thought will also become apparent through television, when images of persons are transmitted.

Even some observant photographers point out that the difference of photographs depends not only on purely external conditions, but also on the inner state of the subject. Thus also in this case we arrive at the concept of the reflection of thought.

Discussions about hypnotism and suggestion, that is to say, about the trained methods of influence, have already become common. But the limited consciousness as yet but feebly admits that not only in cases of trained mental influences, but absolutely in all cases of more or less clear thinking, powerful reactions upon the surroundings take place.

This consideration will once more remind us of the concept of respon-

sibility, about which we recently had several evidences. What lofty beauty is contained in the idea of responsibility and service ! And there is no such spot on earth, where man would not be subject to these two great pre-destinations.

When we evoke from space, words and sounds, are they not followed also by the ever present properties of the energy of thought ? ! Along tremendous distances the human voice, directed by thought, clearly resounds.

No doubt, across the vast space, together with the outer sound, are also stretched the inner strings of a mighty energy. Someone will sense them quite clearly, another though feeling them, will deny. And in such a negation there will be again present the element of fear. For the fearing consciousness shudders at the very hint that it is surrounded by in-

fluences and energies. Precisely that which should uplift people, casts the weak-willed into fear—fear which is the consequence of something indefinite and chaotic. But fear will not save us from chaos. Fears are the very gates to chaos !

It is beautiful, being clad in valour, to realise the grandeur of thought and of all the energies which it sets into action. Though through mechanical means, nevertheless let people hurriedly approach the thoughts about thought in all its mighty significance. And instead of a chaotic fear, many seemingly complicated problems of life will become illumined by the realisation of all the possibilities of thought. Not without reason was it said: "Act not only in body, but also in thought!"

What a beautiful concept: "Thought in Infinity !"

## RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN INDIA

*By Prof. S. V. Puntambekar, M.A. (Oxon), Bar-at-Law*

[Mr. Puntambekar is the Professor of History in the Benares Hindu University. In the present article he gives a running survey of some of the important religious movements in modern India. One would, however, note that there are important omissions like the movement associated with Sri Aurobindo, the influence on religious thought exerted by Mahatma Gandhi, etc.]

**I**NDIA possesses a large and varying tradition of religious beliefs based on the experiences, interpretations and utterances of her revered sages and seers who had led a noble life of contemplation and service in order to experience and realise the supreme end of life and the *summum bonum* of existence. To these indigenous traditions and declared paths of spiritual life were added early in her history, experiences, interpretations and utterances of religions coming from abroad. Their contact and on-

slaught irritated our orthodox minds, puzzled our common minds, and opened a path of new experience and search to our inquiring minds. Consequently a set of new heresies and harmonies, creeds and credulities, arose and have made the religious life of India a confusion worse confounded.

In order to give this rich but confused heritage of religious tradition and treasure a proper perspective and interpretation, and in order to make the common man understand the rela-

tive value of religious experiences embodied in them, Indian saints and sages like Namdev, Nanak and Kabir sang their divine songs.

In the wake of these interpretations and valuations there came the new learning, secular and scientific, from the West in the nineteenth century. Its material, positive and worldly tone, and its secular and scientific achievements created a feeling of resentment, distrust and doubt in us, about a number of our religious, social and moral ideas, and led to the rise of atheists, agnostics and sceptics in the country. Thus the nineteenth century developed a complex atmosphere of personal doubt and uncertainty, social orthodoxy and fanaticism in religious matters, and led to conflicts and conversions.

The religious problem of India has become a vast, complicated world problem. The approach to it is not easy. It has to find a way out of the difficulties of traditional loyalties, rational doubts, scientific attacks, secular needs, materialistic objections, fanatical conflicts and humanitarian protests. The problem has presented itself in the form whether there is one right path or many paths, whether the indigenous religion or the foreign religions are true, whether there should be any religion at all, and whether religious life requires any external authority or organisation such as priesthood, church, Samgha, caste or a set of doctrines and disciplines.

In the past Indian sages always adopted the method of synthesis in understanding the various religious experiences which were gained. The Bhagavadgita and the Mahabharata have tried in this way to appreciate

the value of various approaches to right religious life, and of the varied experiences garnered by our great seers in the past.

Indian religious thinkers have not developed any unitary and exclusive conception of one spiritual path for human salvation or happiness, though its various exponents and followers have, no doubt, preferred the one or the other according to their temper or experience or understanding. In purely religious matters it has no social system or political ambition to preach or impose, no religious hatred or exclusiveness to be sounded. It leaves every individual absolute freedom to take to any path which suits his walk of life, his strength of understanding and his keenness of intuition, inspiration or search.

In the nineteenth century the religious problem in India was approached, understood and restated by a number of great men. Some of them tried to study it comprehensively, to appreciate intellectually its highest religious experiences and disciplines, and to understand their moral and social implications. Some tried to understand and reinterpret a part of our ancient scriptures, taking it to be the highest, on rational and moral grounds, comparing it with other religious traditions and systems and setting the rest aside as deficient, misleading or heretic. Others tried to experience by personal contemplation and intuition the experiences and disciplines of all religions and to find out the nature of their quest and their underlying purpose. Others still appreciated intellectually the value of each religion as the most suited for the time, place and people among whom it was manifested and evolved. And lastly a few rejected completely



all forms, traditions and beliefs as hindrances to spiritual life, leaving the individual to know himself and to be his own guide and saviour. A different set of secular thinkers, rationalist and naturalist, attacked all religions and their beliefs as being contrary to scientific knowledge or natural impulse, while others adopted a sceptic or agnostic stand. The old conservatives adopted a *fundamentalist* attitude and were called Sanatanis, as against the secularists and scientists who were, and may be, termed modernists. The Liberals did not reject the one or the other extreme but tried to reform and adjust their life according to the needs of the time.

The attempt of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj to study the manifold religious life of India and to grasp it intellectually was based on the old but eternal teachings of the Upanishads. He applied them rationally to the working out of religious practices and social behaviour of his Samaj. It was a rational reconstruction of religious and social life of India based on her highest religious experience and philosophy of life. His Samaj no doubt borrowed some foreign forms but they were not its essence. It accepted the Upanishadic idea of God, condemned image worship, sacrifice and priesthood. There was to be a direct communion with God and an emphasis on hymns and prayers in His worship. Its leaders did not revile other religions. But by its exclusiveness in belief and eclecticism in methods of worship it left a large amount of religious experience and life unexplored and uninterrupted, and soon it developed into a number of sects.

Swami Dayananda Saraswathi and his Arya Samaj attempted to study the overgrown religious life of India. But it also developed an exclusive attitude. It based its faith on the Vedas and rejected all historical and contemporary developments of Indian religious thought and foreign religious systems. It was purely a restatement of the value and authority of the old Vedic religion of the Aryas and its supremacy over all systems or faiths and practices. It advocated a reconstruction of society, polity and religion on Vedic basis. Thus this Samaj has revival and reform as its ideal and method. It is not for synthesis or eclecticism. It however opens its doors to all. It is thus proselytising. It rejects idol worship but adopts Vedic forms of sacrifice and prayer for worship. It no doubt studied all other sects and systems in India but only to reject them as false or heretical. It has largely contributed to the vigour and organisation of our life.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's message and gospel are based on a personal experience of spiritual life in its manifold or universal aspect. He acquired by Yogic intuition and contemplation the highest spiritual experience. His gospel has no exclusive and unitarian aspect. It discloses a penetration into the universal mind and spirit through different paths of experience and realisation. It is neither monotheistic nor polytheistic but theistic and transcendental.

It accepts many paths to the realisation of the spiritual happiness. It sees many aspects and faces of the one Reality. The Paramahansa's search was for understanding the purpose of life and the nature of all religious experience, and for seeing the

vision of God. He tried to live fully according to the various religious disciplines and came to the conclusion that all religious experience is true and one. Swami Vivekananda, his great disciple says, "To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master." He left every religion undisturbed because he realised that they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion.

The message of his mission is humanitarian, not sectarian. Its work and service are intended for spiritual awakening and guidance. Its emphasis is on the spiritual values of life. It is synthetic in its interpretation, harmonising in its outlook and humanitarian in its spirit. It does not apprehend any conflict between religion, philosophy, science and humanity in their highest pursuits and teachings. It is universal in tone, tolerant in belief, humble in service, chaste in action and pure in thought. It represents and interpretes most remarkably the foundation of Indian religious thought, expression and aspiration evolved in its long history.

It preaches that through the process of Yogic meditation and discipline man can know himself and the Highest, and transcend the utmost bounds of his humanity and reach a state of undivided union with the highest reality where the individual is completely merged in the Infinite. It asserts that spiritual values are not merely incidents in the experience of individual men, realised and achieved by them in various degrees, feebly and dimly by the common man, more intensely and richly by the highly endowed or developed natures who represent the peak of humanity. It also states that in such experiences

man makes contact with an aspect of the universe that is real and supremely important, an aspect which takes precedence of the physical realm.

In these teachings the sanction for a man's conduct is not a particular authority or discipline but self-knowledge, self-experience and personal service. Sri Ramakrishna was primarily a mystic, not a reformer or a philosopher. His experience was "an overwhelming consciousness of God and of his own soul, a consciousness which absorbs all other centres of interest." His experience and outlook far transcended the symbols among which he lived. The credal forms which he employed were only a scaffold by which he ascended. His communion was a personal one with a living Reality or Presence, as an object of love, capable of response and demanding total self-surrender, in spite of his idea of the Absolute or Impersonal one.

His teachings and personality really satisfied, as it does even to-day, the inquiring minds of that age who had felt a great dissatisfaction with their life, moral, social and religious. The Paramahansa's majestic personality and the force of his teachings swept away the doubts, dissatisfactions and questionings of the inquiring youth of India. But they had to undergo a certain discipline to understand it. It was not easy and accessible to all. It had its mystic side. Hence its interpretations and visions could not be grasped or seen by every secular or scientific mind, though its noble messages and moral precepts would touch the heart of every one.

The Theosophical movement though foreign in origin took strong root

and prospered in India. It was not a sectarian movement. Its aim was an international brotherhood. Its main object was to show that the development of humanity and the world is based on a Divine plan of evolution, and that all religions are a manifestation of that plan, and that there can be no antagonism between them. It emphasized the belief that "the redemption of any nation should come through its own self-evolved leaders, not from without." Its teachings increased the respect and reverence for indigenous religions and led to the study, appreciation and tolerance of different religions. It studied them scientifically, but sympathetically and showed that there was no conflict between religion and science and philosophy, and that science was not a danger to religion but supported its truths and laws. Men from different sects and religions joined it without having to give up their own religion. It was really an international brotherhood of followers of different religions. They came to understand better their own religions after reading the Theosophical expositions of them.

The scientific spirit of the modern West is antagonistic to religion, to its supernaturalism and transcendentalism, to its ethics of rewards and punishment, to its hell and heaven. The Theosophical Society tried to get over it by using science to explain these religious ideas and beliefs.

There is another tendency in our religious life of to-day represented by Krishnamurthy. It is the anarchistic tendency to exalt the natural man, the man of pure feeling, with his emotions, intuitions and urges coming

from the depth of his inner self, and expressing themselves in a variety of wayward ways. The school which accepts this adopts the gospel of self-expression and the law of natural divine urge as guides of conduct. It does not believe in any code of right and wrong. Every one is to go by personal preferences and understandings. There is to be guidelessness in matters of conduct and belief, and indifference in regard to particular or set values. According to Krishnamurthy the ultimate goal of mind is the purification of the self, which means the development of individual uniqueness. There is no God except the man who has purified himself. When you bind life to beliefs and traditions—to codes of morality—you kill life. For the understanding of life you must have revolt, dissatisfaction and great discontentment. To follow another, whoever he may be, is the very negation of what is true. In order to attain liberation it is not necessary to join any organisation, any religion, because they are binding, they are limiting, they hold you to a particular form of worship and belief. Authority is antithesis of spirituality.

Because one's mind and heart are bound by traditions and beliefs, by the sacred books of the past, by the dark shadows of temples and remembered gods, one does not understand either the present or the future. If one is looking constantly backwards, one will never discover Truth. Therefore one should not follow, obey or be loyal to any person except to oneself.

These are some of the tendencies in religion or approaches to religion that we note taking place in our

country. There are other people like Dr. Rabindranath Tagore or Sir S. Radhakrishnan who are studying and stating the problem of religion in India in their lectures, addresses and books. Besides, there are some living saints and sages whose messages we have dimly heard, or do not hear be-

cause they have not given expression to it in public and their followers have not been able to make them available to us. But there is no doubt that any one who studies religious life in modern India would feel the quickening impulse that is actuating it at the present day.

## MORALITY OR RELIGION?

*By Prof. H. D. Bhattacharya, M.A., B.L. (P.R.S.)*

[Mr. Bhattacharya is the Professor of Psychology in the University of Dacca. In the present article he discusses some aspects of the relation between religion and morality.]

*(Continued from last issue)*

UT the question is whether there would ever come a time when men would not feel the necessity of a religious bulwark to buttress the citadel of morality. It has been the dream of all secularistic movements that a day would arrive when men would be moral without being religious, that men would preserve the social relations of life without supporting them on transcendental assumptions. Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* describes religion as an obsessional neurosis of humanity, which, like most neuroses, is removeable by proper treatment. When mankind would know that the worship and fear of a heavenly father are reactions against, and compensations for, the unconscious sense of rebellion against the earthly father, from which none of us is free, it would see through the illusion and be rid of religion altogether. Grown-up humanity would as surely get rid of the fear of the heavenly father as grown-up men do of their earthly father. Then the relations of men would be dictated not by any emotion caused by unconsci-

ous factors but by conscious and utilitarian considerations. Men would be moral because they would find it to be the best method of living together; and if they choose to be immoral, they would be haunted not by any fear of Divine wrath but by a fear of social reprisal. Then the most moral injunction would be the Golden Rule that one should do unto others as one wishes to be done by them, and that, not from a sense of the brotherhood of man but purely from secular considerations of social equilibrium and social security. Self-sacrifice would not be ruled out, for very often the individual would see that ultimately such abnegation of the self brings in a greater good to himself, or to those in whom he is interested than a direct self-seeking; but all such acts would be dictated by cool calculating reason, and not by the impetuosities of an emotional life whose roots are in the region of the unconscious.

It would be idle to deny that there is some justification for an expectation of this kind. The bonds that hold society together are rooted deeply in

the nature of man. Our instincts of gregariousness and sympathy, our imitative habits and proneness to social suggestion all play a part in keeping us together; and even our instinct of self-preservation prompts close co-operation with others for safety and succour. Sex and parental instinct form the first social unit, and hunger and fear drive us to seek the aid of our fellowmen. Even enjoyment has a social reference. We unconsciously crave for company even when we seem to enjoy our solitude. Even Diogenes wished to be in a market place to show that he did not care for others' company and to exhibit his cynicism. Now, into this social feeling religion need not always enter as a factor. Men in the most primitive state might indeed celebrate their crude rites in company; but it is not the rites that made them into a social group. If, therefore, morality is rooted in those tendencies of the mind that keep men within proper bounds to make society possible, it is conceivable that with the advance of culture those extraneous factors that are imported into social relations from the side of religion would progressively diminish and that ethical movements designed to free morality from religion would assume greater proportions, and ultimately morality without religion would be the creed of mankind. In the past religions have not always been patterns of moral science, for not infrequently they prescribed or prompted courses of action that later generations have found unworthy of humanity in its ideal form. Even to-day social legislations are necessary to prevent customs and ceremonies that religions prescribed in the past as parts of human duty. The delay in bringing

about the desired consummation is due to the fact that the culture necessary to abandon religion is not so widespread in any community as is requisite for the establishment of morality without religion. But we may all live in hope, it is held, for that day when men will live in amity and peace without bothering themselves about the powers that would be offended or pleased by certain lines of human action and would punish or reward men for their conduct.

This raises the question whether religion is a superfluous luxury of the human imagination, whether individuals and races people the unseen with mysterious powers just as they write novels and compose poems. No one denies that in the delineation of the unseen and the supersensible a good part is taken by imagination, especially when divine acts and utterances are conjectured and portrayed or heavenly and hellish scenes are painted. But human reason too plays a part in laying down the probable details of the other world, especially where Heaven and God are viewed not in terms of imagination but in the light of the requirements of reason. We omit from consideration the cases of those who claim to speak in terms of their own experience—who regard religious events and entities not as matters of hypothesis or conjecture but as veritable revelations from a realm beyond or within. Their number unfortunately is so few that unless they are given full credence for their experiences and expressions like experts in other fields, there will always remain a suspicion that they are deluding both themselves and others by their so-called revelations from another realm. While, therefore, there is no reason to suspect the exist-

ence of religious geniuses (for musical prodigies, born poets and artists are equally matters of experience), there is this difference between them and secular geniuses that the object with which they deal are withdrawn from the realm of ordinary verification. The world has neither the time nor the mind to tread the tedious path of spiritual culture which a religious genius demands of the ordinary man, and very often the latter feels that after all the whole thing might be barren of spiritual results.

But happily there are other considerations to test the possibility of the disappearance of the religious attitude. If we find that religion serves certain needs of the spirit which no other form of consciousness can ever serve, there will necessarily remain something analogous to religion at all times in human experience. Possibly, the old idea, that whenever human ignorance and incapacity yawn their portentous mouth we shall see inside the face of God, bases His existence on very insecure foundation; for the rapid development of human knowledge and power would soon seem to banish God from the lives of men. But if it so happens that religion stands for that call of the ideal from which at no time the human mind is free, then the decay of religion is sure to usher in other forms of ideals to replace the religious form. The development of national and party ideals in recent years all over the globe shows that the need of an ideal is an indispensable condition of social existence. The divine fetishes have been thrown away, but new fetishes have taken their place. The cult of the fatherland or the motherland rouses as much enthusiasm in many minds as the

cult of the father-god or the mother-goddess used to do in the past. Brotherhoods, based more or less on the religious ideal but professedly secular in their doctrines, have been established in many countries, and unions and guilds are replacing the communities based on religion in more advanced countries. There is some truth in the Freudian proposition that religion is a neurosis; for like the latter it gets hold of new expressions when its primary manifestations are checked. In the past religions have not been noted for the uniformity of their contents; they rather represented certain attitudes of the mind towards principles and powers whose assumption was necessitated by certain types of experience or exigency. These attitudes still remain although the contents are to-day not supernatural but pertain to earthly existence. The same irrationality and impatience that religious fanaticism evinced are to be seen in the zeal of present political and economic groups. We may believe, therefore, that men will continue to derive emotional satisfaction in the future as in the past from certain types of ideas and images which are akin to religious beliefs of the past.

In fact, all past experiments with mere morality seem to have signally failed. Confucius attempted to base society on five social relations, but not only were the elements of national religion retained and preserved by him, but they were extended by creating new deities, including himself. Buddhism started with protest against transcendental cravings but ended with being a religion which promised solace and salvation to its adherents. The Stupas replaced the temples and the human Buddha

became the nucleus of a whole host of divine beings called after his name. Jainism rejected the Vedic gods but the adoration of the Tirthankaras practically became a religious cult, and latterly many Hindu gods managed to effect an entrance into Jainism itself. Possibly, in better times to come, these revivals of religious symbols would be less in mere morality; but the precedents are rather disappointing and show how the human mind is always in search of a much stabler basis of conduct than social equilibrium and personal good. Culture has probably killed for all times the possibility of founding a religion without morals; but whether it would succeed in establishing morality without religion is doubtful. Possibly, in religion we are face to face with certain innate propensities of the human mind, and unless human nature is radically altered, religion, or something akin to it, is bound to persist. In fact, the moment man begins to speculate about the foundations of his own behaviour (including the pursuit of selfishness) he is driven by irresistible logic to formulate a theory of reality and end in some sort of religious belief. Even if morality and religion are rooted in different aspects of the spiritual life, they are insensibly drawn together with the advance of culture; and if latterly culture itself effects a dissociation between the two, it always sets up new ideals to back up morality in place of the discredited religious ideal. Possibly, in future, the religious element will recede a bit into the background; but any attempt to found morality on social convenience will soon find that without an inviolable tether in the realm of the super-

sensible it will ultimately come to grief.

This is not a plea for sticking to outworn creeds or refusing to think out new solutions to the complicated relations of social, national and international life. The narrow morality which looked upon the alien in faith as the legitimate target of inhuman treatment, or the outcast as God's damned, would disappear in future, and a new morality based on the recognition of the value of the individual as such would evolve with culture. But along with it would also arise a conception of the ultimate principle adequate for the justification of the new morality. All the existing religions of the world were evolved at a time when the world was much smaller and the relations of life much simpler and the knowledge and power of man were limited in all ways. Any theory of human relationship which is not capable of application to new situations and problems would soon be exploded. But man would never remain contented with mere morals, for he is speculative and curious, and the problem of the necessity of living at peace with others and seeking and offering help in distress is bound to raise transcendental issues. Man lives for all times, if not in all spaces, and any social understanding that man evolves has reference to that larger sphere of existence where the duration of his own life is an insignificant factor.

We may, therefore, look without concern at the growing secularity of social relations and a certain laxity in the old moral bonds. Released suddenly from the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline, humanity is indulging in the inevitable orgies of new-found freedom. After the efferves-

cence of the novel life has subsided, the conservative elements of human nature would again assert themselves and man would evolve a new religious basis of his social duties and preach a new gospel. I have never believed in a last revelation, and I trust to the inscrutable ways of the Principle that holds men together to compel men to find out the hidden roots that nourish the moral life of man. To most of us those roots would for ever remain hidden; but we have no right to foist our own imperfections on others and to imagine that to others gifted with larger spiritual visions they would not be transparent. We must admit the possibility that many more in future would probably prefer not to think of ultimate issues but would still be moral. But we have no reason to think that religion which touched men to finer issues at all times in the past would cease to inspire future races of men, and that the subtle, the supersensible and the supernatural would be banished from the realms of human thought in some future time. What would happen is that religion would cease to meddle with concrete practices, which are bound to be infected by the temporal and the spi-

ritual, and would limit itself to those fundamental principles that are capable of infinite application. Religion would discover formulæ and not facts of noble life, and the greater the advancement of reason and culture, the greater is the possibility of spiritual discoveries being of universal appeal. We are still ignorant of the method by which some of the most ignorant men of the world saw into the mysteries of existence far deeper than the learned men of their times; and although we believe that there will never be a last revelation and a last prophet, we may still believe that some of the religious discoveries of ancient prophets are so universal that they are not likely to be altered by any later revelation. We believe also that human nature being unitary in character, conduct and faith would mutually influence each other, and that man with his present capacities and tendencies would always be in tune with the Infinite, feel the call of the ideal and the supersensible in the inmost fibre of his being, and develop a religious attitude to the world in extension of the moral relationship to other sentient creatures, to which he is committed by his social life.

(Concluded.)

## THE UNSEEN HAND OF GOD

*By V. A. Suryanarayana, B.A.*

[Mr. Suryanarayana gives in these lines his reflections on a tragedy that is still fresh in the mind of India.]

**D**AY after day, we see around us many of our brethren and fellow beings sinking into the grave. Every day we meet with some accident or other which sets our minds at un-

rest. The death of a dear friend or relation, the sight of a distressed being, the sudden collapse of a commercial firm, or the thought of an approaching disaster—anything of a



stirring nature is enough to awaken us to the reality of things and the unseen hand of God. When anything unusual occurs before us, or whom anything untoward happens to us, we are thrown into a mood of melancholy for a moment, and in the intensity of our grief or suffering, we swear to give up our frivolous pursuits and feverish activities from that moment, and solemnly determine to take to a life of piety and devotion to God, whose existence we seldom feel when we are in the height of our prosperity and when everything goes aright with us.

In moments of despair and danger we feel the awesome presence of God before us. We recognise the omnipotence of God and the frailty of our physical being, which counts most when the unseen Power withdraws from our fold. We revolve on the deep problems of life and realise the evanescent nature of earthly things. We are impotent when the combined forces of Nature rage over us with all their petulance. We feel our helplessness when we are faced by the devastating demon of death, which is busy in snatching away day by day hundreds of thousands of our fellow-beings. We wonder at the playful sport of God in creating millions of creatures to fill the earth every day. But how often do we feel and recognise His Presence? How many souls actually experience the real joy at the sight of the unseen Hand that is guiding our destinies? How few of us are privileged to feel God-consciousness in our every-day life — a privilege given only to a select few, who are the salt of the earth, the exalted souls on earth, the selfless ones who strive for the good of humanity.

Most of us rush through our daily routine of life in a mechanical way and discharge our so-called duties of life in a perfunctory manner, feeling always the presence and dictates of the belly and never the existence and exhortations of the soul, which in ninety per cent. of humanity lies in a dormant state. How few of us are really doing our duties conscientiously, earnestly and without injuring the interests of our fellow-beings? Everywhere we see the hard struggle for existence, the strife and contention to promote our welfare, and the cut-throat competition into which we enter with one another to exploit, to increase wealth and to enhance our prospects in life. Why this constant warfare for a three day's existence? Of what avail is this deadly struggle to destroy each other? Wherefore is this worry, hurry and scurry to earn a pittance and to attain prominence in life? The process of construction and destruction, construction by destruction and destruction by construction, is ever going on in this world. We carry on this monotonous strife and struggle for existence, for exploitation and for self-aggrandisement, never thinking even for a moment why we are born in this world, where we are going and what we have to live for. The day of judgment will come at last when we will have to render a precise and full account of what we have done to ourselves, to our neighbours, to our country, and to humanity and God at large. The solemn determinations that seize our beings in moments of peril and powerlessness, leave us after a few days, and we again plunge our beings in the mire of materialism and mammonism, and merge our souls in the mud of mechanical life, in the dull

and dead routine of mundane life. All the philosophical speculations, pious resolutions, and penitent proclamations, flee from our minds, the moment we resume our suspended activities with redoubled vigour. We wish to have a permanent or at least a prolonged life to build our fortune, to make a name, and to mar the prospects of our competitors or fellow-workers. There comes the warrant from the Court of God Yama, suddenly and unexpectedly, and we cannot refuse the summons ; we have not the courage to answer the call. We are thrown into the abysmal depths of despair, into the sea of sorrow, and into the jaws of death. Then we again remind ourselves of the visitations of divinity into our midst, from time to time, and of our solemn promises and utter forgetfulness of those awakening thoughts, and we bewail the utter futility of our belated penitence and persuasion. Therefore is it enjoined in every Scripture in the world that we live this life to the best of our advantage in future.

The unseen and omnipotent hand of God is nowhere more clearly manifest than in the recent terrific tragedy at Bihta near Patna. The shocking news of the sudden and instantaneous deaths of over a hundred persons, including women and innocent children, and, the dangerous situation of nearly two hundred persons lying on beds in the Dinapore hospital, drive deep into the heart of every one that has heard this heart-rending news, the lesson that life is but momentary, and human beings are helpless creatures when the forces of destruction prevail in all their fury. The tragedy is too terrible to be easily forgotten. It leaves a permanent im-

pression on the minds of all truth-seekers, philosophers and philanthropists. It has created a great convulsion in the minds of those that cling to life with all their hopes of making the best of it. But how many souls have seriously thought of the operations of the unseen Hand that has decided the destinies of so many souls by causing their destruction in a minute bringing forth a huge tragedy by the simple derailment of a railway train? The hopes of hundreds of souls are blasted in a minute. The whole scene is one huge mass of blood and broken bones, of shattered brains and powdered skulls, of pounded hearts and parted limbs. Oh! the woeful day that has brought forth misery and sorrow to the parentless children and widowed women in this calamitous cataclysm.

Who can reconcile himself to the ideas of divine justice and retribution unless he be a heartless being? But who can account for the inevitable and instantaneous end of over a hundred souls consequent upon the conspiracy of human and divine agents? Who can explain the motives behind the action that has come to pass by the will of the Universal Spirit? The tragedy is as inexplicable as it is unbearable. Frail man! Why wail over a thing that is not within your power of understanding and which is beyond your power to prevent or escape! Make the best of this momentary life by always trying to live in, and enjoy, His presence, which alone can redeem you from sin and suffering, and from sorrow and slavery. Seek the unseen Hand of God that can save you from the chains of birth and death and take shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord, the power of chanting whose sacred names enables men

to cross the sea of Samsara. May the visitations of divinity, in the form of these terrible tragedies be a lesson and blessing in disguise to all those living, by awakening them to the

mysteries of the workings of the will of God, who always intends maintaining the balance of the cosmic and the Atmic forces in everything that comes to pass in His Kingdom.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

*By Srāmi Thyāgisananda*

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a *Gnani* as well as a *Bhakta*. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

अमृतस्वरूपा च ॥ ३ ॥

(सा भक्तिः That Bhakti) अमृतस्वरूपा  
whose intrinsic form is *Amritam*  
च and (भवति is).

3. And in its own<sup>1</sup> intrinsic nature, *Bhakti* is nothing less than the immortal<sup>2</sup> bliss<sup>3</sup> of freedom<sup>4</sup> *Mukti* itself, which comes unsolicited<sup>5</sup> by the grace of God and by self-sacrifice<sup>6</sup>.

Notes 1.—*Own intrinsic nature*—This sense is conveyed by the force of the adjective 'sua' added on to the word 'rupa'. Note the absence of this adjective in the previous *Sutra*. While that *Sutra* was meant to be a description of *Bhakti* from the relative standpoint, this *Sutra* purports to give a description of the same as it is in itself.

2. *Immortal*.—The word *Amritam* in the *Sutra* has various shades of meaning, all of which are important in the context, and it is to suggest all these meanings that Narada has used this word in preference to other words, such as *Mukti*, *Kaivalya*, *Apavarga*, etc. Accordingly our translation of the expression is not merely literal but brings out all these suggested meanings.

First of all, *Amritam* is freedom from death or change, i.e., to put it positively, it is immortality. But the permanence or immortality alluded to in our text is not the permanence vouchsafed to us by the physical laws of conservation of energy or by the biological law of the continuity of the germ plasma as the carrier of life from generation to generation. Nor is it mere life continued in another birth on the principle of transmigration, believed in by all religions, primitive or civilised, except the organised form of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Neither does it refer to the survival of the individual in an astral or ethereal body as advocated by the spiritualists. It does not also mean the comparatively permanent life of ease and pleasure for eternal aeons in any astronomical region or any subtle world, variously called Heaven, Paradise, *Brahmaloka*, *Vaikuṇṭha*, etc. The ordinary Heaven or *Svarga*, which all popular religions offer as a reward for good conduct and orthodox performance of rites and ceremonies, is really not permanent, nor is it a place of unalloyed happiness. The Hindu scriptures always emphasise the impermanence of *Svarga* and celestial pleasures. In fact our *Rishis*

paint a glowing picture of heaven only to attract to spiritual life those slovenly minds who refuse to move unless some recompense is promised to them in the shape of sensual happiness. As the *Bhagavatham* XI, 21, 23, says, "The Vedic passages treating of fruits of work, do not set forth the highest well-being of men, but are mere inducements like those for taking medicine, spoken with a view to lead people to their highest good." The *Upanishads* therefore assure us that everything which is an effect produced by an action must pass away and cannot be permanent.

On the other hand, spiritual bliss, once it is achieved, is never lost. *Vide Sandilya Sutra*, 8, which promises eternal happiness to *Bhaktas*. Speaking of the eternity of the fruit of self-realisation, the *Chandogya Upanishad* concludes with the words, "He never returns from that state," and this is echoed in the *Brahma Sutras* also in its last *Sutra*, "No returning according to the words of the *Sruti*." All *Acharyas* agree in this, except Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He says that even *Mukti* is not eternal for the following reasons:—1. As the soul is finite, it cannot have eternal enjoyment. 2. If there is no return, the other world becomes overcrowded, and this world depopulated. 3. Happiness, if prolonged too much, would cause satiation and a longing for change. 4. There is no man who would prefer life imprisonment. *Vide Satyarth Prakash*. It has only to be remarked that this view entirely misunderstands the nature of the immortality and bliss of *Mukti*. *Br. Aranyaka* I, 2, 7 points out emphatically, however, "The realised man conquers further death. Death cannot overtake him. It becomes his self."

*Cf.* the famous lines of Tondaradi-podi Alwar in his *Tirumozhi*, Verse 1: "Whom do we fear now? We are so well protected by His holy name that even death flies from our door." *Cf.* also the *Puranic* story of how Death had to flee away from Markandeya when he sought protection of Lord Siva. See also St. Luke XX. 36: "Neither can they die any more."

3. *Bliss*.—*Amrita* is also a synonym for nectar or bliss. *Bhakti* or supreme spiritual realisation is a supremely joyous experience, an unadulterated and unalloyed state of absolute felicity and beatitude. Worldly pleasures, as well as celestial joy, pale into insignificance in comparison with the joy of spiritual bliss or *Ananda* which the *Upanishads* designate as *Brahman* itself. All sense pleasures, mundane or celestial, are pale reflections or partial manifestations of this *Ananda*, through a temporary predominance of the Sattva Guna, and all craving for the same is only an unconscious groping in the dark to gain *Ananda* or spiritual bliss, our birth-right. Every desire is a veiled prayer, and every satisfaction, a concealed and confused taste of *Ananda*. The extremely sweet nature of the spiritual experience is recognised by the *Vedic Rishi* when he prays thus in *R.V.* I, 154, 5: "May I attain to that beloved mansion of His, where those men that are devoted to God are happy, where flows the perennial fountain of nectar, just by the mighty striding feet of *Vishnu*, in His Supreme Abode." The *Br. Up.* II, 15, 4, characterises the Atman that is realised as honey which is itself *Amritam*. Yajnavalkya in *Br. Up.* II, 4, tells Maitreyi that every one and everything in this world is loved only for the sake of Atman.

Again in IV, 3, 32, the same *Upa-nishad* says : "This is its supreme attainment, this is its supreme glory, this is the highest world, this is its supreme bliss. On a particle of this very bliss all other beings live." The *Tait. Up.*, II, 7 says, "This indeed Bliss itself. Having attained this Bliss, man becomes happy. Who would have lived and breathed if this sky of bliss had not existed ? This is verily that which bestows Bliss." In *Ch. Up.* VIII, 23 Narada himself is taught by Sanat-kumara, "The Infinite is Bliss. There is no happiness in the finite." The *Katha Up.*, IV, 5 calls *Atman* as enjoyer of honey, and in V, 12 and 13 it says that "eternal happiness and peace are possible only for the realised man and to none else." The *Svetasvatara Up.* calls us all "children of Immortal Bliss". *Gita* V, 21 says that the realised man finds happiness that is in himself, and being in union with God, enjoys undying Bliss. In VI, 21 it describes the state as one of boundless joy beyond the senses, and in VI, 27 and 28 it describes the realised man as experiencing the infinite joy of union with the Lord. *Bhagavatham* XII, 12, 51 speaks of the state as delightful and as a constant feast to the mind which sucks up the sea of sorrow of mortals.

One of the beautiful names by which Nammalwar addressed God is *Aravamuda* which means 'Nectar endless'. The word *Azhvar*, which the *Vaishnavites* use to denote *Bhaktas*, itself means those who are immersed in bliss. *Tiruvaymozhi* II, 8, 4, speaks of *Vaikuntham* as the country where joy is endless. Pillay Lokacharya's *Mumukshupadi* III says, "Love pursued even after bliss

is gained adds zest to the bliss." Parasara Bhatta in his *Sringara Stava* speaks of 'love and bliss as one truth'. The *Mukundamala* says that the author 'is not aware of any other bliss equal to the nectar of the blessed feet of Hari ; and he invites us to drink the nectar called Krishna, for that is the supreme panacea for all worldly ills and what gives eternal Bliss ! The *Bhakti Rasayanam* of Madhusudana Saraswati says in its very first *Sloka* that 'Bhakti is the supreme goal of man's endeavour and is incomparable and unalloyed bliss.' The Narayaniya says that devotion to God, which is sweet in the beginning, in the middle and in the end, gives the highest bliss'. Tayumanavar's famous *Ananda Kalippu* is justly noted as an attempt by a comparatively modern saint to describe the joy of spiritual experience. Cf. also Jesus saying, "My joy I give unto you and your joy no man taketh from you." Cf. also Mathew XXV, 22 and 23, where Jesus, speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven, says, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". Cf. also Quoran Part XVIII Chap. XXI, 101 and 102 which the commentator explains as referring to the bliss of communion with God ; also Part XXIII, Chap. XXXVI, where the happiness of heaven is described in one word, 'Peace', corresponding to the *Santi* of the *Upanishads*.

Plotinus calls the spiritual state as a 'divinely ineffable harbour of repose'. Fawcett calls it 'joy eternal, and Eeregina, the state whose delight is perfect'.

The beauty of this spiritual bliss is never adulterated with even the least trace of misery. "Every sweet has its sour," says Emerson, but the

bliss of realisation is above it. *Gita* speaks of sensual pleasures in V, 22, as only sources of pain, and as having a beginning and an end.

It must also be realised that there is no loss of individuality in this highest experience. Once Sri Ramakrishna said to Narendra (Swami Vivekananda): "God is like a liquid sweet, would you not dive into the sea? Just think of a vessel with a wide mouth containing syrup of sugar, and suppose you are a fly anxious to drink of the sweet liquid. Where should you sit and drink?" Narendra replied that he would prefer to sit at the edge of the vessel, for if he came to a point beyond his depth, he was sure to be drowned. Thereupon Sri Ramakrishna said, "You forget, my son, that by diving deep into the Divine Sea you need not be afraid of death. Remember, *Satchidananda* Sea is the Sea of Immortality. The water of this Sea never causes death but is the water of everlasting life. Think not like some foolish persons that you may run to excess in your love of God." *Bhakti* is thus no loss of individuality but only a supreme transcendence of the limitations of individuality and regaining of the true status of the Self. Cf. Lotze's statement, "Perfect personality is in God only. To all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof. The finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of personality, but a limit and hindrance to its development."

4. *Freedom*.—*Amrita* is another name for *Mukti* or *Moksha* (freedom from the round of births and deaths). It is conceived of both positively and negatively by various schools of thought both in India and elsewhere.

Thus the *Apavarga* of the *Nyaya-Vaisesika* schools is described negatively as release from pain, and not as enjoyment of positive bliss. It is a complete cessation of effort, activity, consciousness, and an absolute detachment of the soul from body, mind, etc. It is an abstract existence without knowledge and happiness. Vatsyayana is emphatic that *Apavarga* cannot be a positive manifestation of soul's happiness and Udyotakara supports him. The *Samkya* and *Yoga* schools speak of *Kaivalya* as an eternal isolation of the seer from the modifications of *Prakriti* or *Chitta*. To them even *Mukti* is only phenomenal, since bondage does not belong to the *Purusha*. It is an escape from suffering and not a manifestation of bliss, since *Purusha* is free from all attributes. Among the *Mimamsakas*, Jaimini and Sabara never concern themselves with *Mukti*. Prabhakara conceives of it negatively as a total disappearance of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and consequent escape from rebirth. It is to him a cessation not only of pain but also of pleasure, and not a state of positive bliss. Kumārila Bhatta also asserts that liberation cannot be eternal unless it is negative in character. So also Parthasarathi. The Buddhist Schools conceive of the final end or *Nirvana* as a complete extinction or 'blowing out' even of the *Atman* itself, and to the Jains, *Nirvana* is a disintegration of the *Karmic* body.

Alone, among the religious and philosophical systems that flourished on the fair soil of India, Vedānta, in all its schools, has emphasised the positive character of the state of *Mukti* along with its negative aspect. To the Vedāntin, whether he is a

*Jnani* or a *Bhakta*, the *summum bonum* is regaining of the natural bliss of the Atman, as well as of freedom from the miseries of *Samsara*. Narada emphasises this double aspect of *Vedantic Mukti* by identifying the positive *Bhakti* (described before as of the nature of Supreme Love) with the negative *Amrita* or freedom from death. In the previous *Sutra* the positive aspect is emphasised, and in this the negative one. The emphasis of the *Bhakti* schools is always on the positive aspect.

Some minor difference among the various schools of Vedanta may be noted here. While Sankara insists upon a complete identification of the individual with God in ultimate experience, the *Bhakti* teachers, Ramanuja and Madhva, are afraid of such identification, and posit the retention of individuality. A point of difference, more important in connection with the present *Sutra*, is that the *Bhakti* schools do not admit of *Jivanmukti* or liberation in this very life. Their *Mukti* is always post-mortem or *Videha Mukti*. This is the view of Christianity and Mohammedanism too. While the Hindu *Bhakti* schools thus deny to the most perfect state attainable in this life, the right to call itself *Mukti*, there is not much difference between the *Para Bhakti* (Supreme Love) of these schools and *Jivanmukti* of Sankara. If the sense of freedom from all misery and a sense of eternal bliss are not possible before death, then there is no meaning in saying that *Bhakti* is *Amrita* or immortality. It will be a contradiction in terms to say that immortality can be attained after death. If *Mukti* is freedom and immortality, it can justify itself only by the experience of the soul, of

its being above death and limitations, in this very life. Hence Sankara and Narada both accept immortality before giving up the body, in this very life. And they are supported by the *Upanishads*. See *Katha* VI, 14, "Then the mortal becomes immortal, and attains *Brahman here*." Also *Tait. A.*, "Realising Him thus, one becomes immortal *here*."

5. *Unsolicited by the Grace of God*.—*Amrita* also means unsolicited alms. The *Bhakta* never craves for *Mukti*; he is quite satisfied to enjoy the love of God for love's sake, and to serve Him for the sake of service. Still *Mukti* comes to him by the grace of God. Cf. *Narayaniyam*, I, 8, "Unlike the *Kalpataur* which has to be approached and solicited if it should satisfy anybody's wish, Thou art always in front of the *Bhaktas* wherever they are, eager to bless them, even without their asking for any favour, and finally gives them eternal bliss." Without His grace *Mukti* is not possible. See *Katha* II, 22, "It is attained by him alone whom God chooses." Cf. also *Svet. Up.* I, 6, "Blessed by Him, it attains immortality." Also *Mahabharata* XII. 337. "Only he can realise Narayana to whom He is gracious." Also *Ibid.* XII, 348, "He who has the grace of Narayana realises Him. He cannot be realised by mere self-effort." Sankara, too, in spite of his being a great advocate of self-effort says in his commentary on *Brahma Sutras* II, 3, 41 and III, 2, 5, "Attainment of *Moksha* comes from intuition arising by the grace of God."

6. *Self-sacrifice*.—The word *Amrita*, in application to Vedic sacrifices, also means the holy food left after sacrificial offerings. In this sense *Amrita* is described as *Yajnasvesha*. By the

clever selection of the word *Amrita* to describe the nature of devotion, the author of the *Sutra* also means by implication that just as *Amrita*, in the sacrificial sense, is associated with self-effort—for sacrifice which gives rise to *Amrita* is born of self-effort—so also *Bhakti* is associated with self-effort. Supreme devotion, of the nature described before, no doubt comes only by the grace of God, but does it come even if a man kept quiet, and did not deserve such grace by his self-effort. It never comes until the mind is purified by continued acts of self-sacrifice. God's grace descends on man always like the blowing wind, but if he wants to take advantage of it, he must do *Sadhana* or spiritual practices, as the boatman must unfurl the sails before he can catch the blowing wind. Thus complete freedom of the will and self-effort are recognised without any prejudice to the doctrine of the grace of God. Cf. *Brahma Sutra*, II, 3, 42 and II, 1, 34, which show that God's grace depends upon man's actions. The *Yoga-*

*vasishta* III, 6, 14 says that there is no way to bring about the end of misery than through one's own self-effort, and the same book II, 6, 27 says that he who relies upon fate, or believes that God will throw him capriciously into heaven or hell is a fool. The *Gita* also in VI, 5, says, "Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not debase himself. For he himself is his friend, and he himself is his foe."

Thus Narada is very happy in his choice of the word *Amrita* to describe the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti*, for in that word is contained in a nutshell the whole doctrine of *Bhakti* in all its implications. Immortality, bliss, and freedom as the end, and the grace of God and self-effort as the means,—these are the various ideas which Narada, by his explicit statement and by the indirect implications, wants us to have in mind when we contemplate the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti*. In short *Bhakti* in its intrinsic nature is nothing less than *Mukti* (liberation) itself.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**A True Highway towards Christian Re-  
lay:** By T. Wiglay, M.A. (*Cantab*).  
George Allen Unwin Ltd., Museum Street,  
London. Price 8sh. 6d. net.

The author has striven through this work to maintain how all people, who can believe only in a God who reveals Himself to-day as in any previous age, need not be disturbed at all by the devastating attack dogmatic theology had to suffer consistently at the hands of science. The New Testament data and the dicta of Church Fathers no more occupy the old place. Analysing the modern mind, Mr. Wiglay points out in the opening chapter how the life-giving properties have long departed from the church, and how the cheap introductions to scientific knowledge through the press and the radio have moulded the scientific out-

look of the masses creating a sharp antagonism between the creeds and dogmas of the church on the one hand, and the assured results of modern thought on the other, so much so the great masses are contented to remain outside the churches. Therefore the need of expressing Christianity in terms acceptable to the modern generation "without treachery to their scientific conscience" is urgently felt. This can be fulfilled only if we discard the theological superstructure and come down to the ground of genuine religion.

Discussing about our ideas regarding Nature he summarises the matter in these pithy words of Lord Balfour: "We now know too much about matter to be materialists." "Viewing the world of Nature in all its degrees of reality and modes of expression



....," states the author after carefully sifting the up-to-date views in philosophy and science, "we discover that every element in it exists only for a conscious knowing mind. If, as we claim, the self with its experiences is implied in every act of knowledge as the unifying principle of it all, and granted that our knowledge of ourselves is partial and incomplete, is it not possible to conceive of ourselves as limited and intermittent manifestations of a Mind Universal which gives being and meaning to the whole universe?" Man is a personality, a living, moving continuum of experience, a unitary whole interpenetrated by feelings, thoughts and purposes. This fact alone could give us the clue to knowledge and interpret the realm of ends or the realm of nature. The known has no existence apart from the knower, and in so far as the personality constantly reaches out to the Universal, maintains our author, it is justifiable to assign a lower reality to the physical order of Nature than that to the spiritual. The Mind Universal alone gives meaning and value to particulars. The chapter on 'Our Idea of Law' is a suggestive one. It is contented that the laws

of Nature can never fully describe an event but only a selected aspect of it. Hence they cannot be hypostatized and regarded as things in themselves existing by their own right. The mode of behaviour and being in Nature, which we describe in terms of law, cannot have an absolute existence apart from the mind which feels, thinks and relates. The universe is law-abiding because it is the expression of an immanent God who is its ever-present Ground. The universe is a process of timeless determination inseparable from a perpetually active, incessantly creative God revealing Himself right through. God is no more the clock-maker watching his wound-up Nature from a distance.

The fourth and the fifth chapters deal with man and God respectively.

The remaining chapters deal with 'Jenis', 'Immanence and Incarnation,' 'Miracle and Miracles,' 'Faith and Knowledge,' 'Sin and Salvation,' 'Personal Survival' and 'The essence of Christianity.' These chapters, although written with much thought and insight, do not carry at places the same general appeal to the seeker of religious fundamentals as the previous ones.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### A Letter from Paris

We give below extracts from an interesting letter received from Swami Siddheswarananda. In our last issue, we had already announced the Swami's departure to Paris to attend the Philosophical Congress and to study the possibilities of starting a Vedanta Centre there. The letter runs as follows:—

1-8-37. Through the grace of Sri Thakur and good wishes and blessings from you all, I had a very happy voyage and came here by train from Marseilles yesterday morning. Rev. S. Maharaj who came the previous day to Paris with Mons. J. H. had come to the station.

The ship was berthed at the harbour by 2 p.m., and getting our French visas we came to the customs. These people did not give us any trouble. We sent wire to Paris and came to Cook's and got my money changed. One pound is 131 Francs. Thus it is very favourable to us. Next we sought out a vegetarian hotel and had our meals. We got our usual boiled vegeta-

bles and bread. But French preparations are entirely different. As Mr. B. was not with us for a few minutes, I had much difficulty to make the landlady understand I wanted milk coffee. Not understanding my language she brought a bottle of rum to mix with black coffee. Then I used the kindergarten method, just showed the shape of a cow and pointed out the way of milking. Then with a loud laughter of understanding, she went to search if there was milk and gave me the disappointing news of 'no milk'.

The train from Marseilles was overcrowded, and as Cook's had arranged for our seats, we got the accommodation. Owing to the International Exhibition now going on, I got as a tourist 50 p.c. concession for 3 months in all French railways and permission to see the exhibition at half rates for ten visits.

We had much desire to see round Marseilles—a very lovely town perched on hillocks, and the ocean on one side. It

has a population of 8 lakhs and is the 2nd city in France. We were much impressed by the hospitality of a policeman who came from the streets, stood in the middle of a heavily trafficking road, and stopped the traffic and permitted us to cross. In Paris, there is not much difficulty in crossing. In definite places lines are put across the road and when the signal light glimmers green, we can cross, and then the pedestrian has priority over vehicular traffics and these signals are automatically worked. We have to get accustomed to "keep to the right" habit.

I am now temporarily lodged in a room belonging to the flat of Mme. G. sister-in-law of R.R. In this very room which I occupy Rev. S. Maharaj stayed a couple of years back, and some time before Mahatma Gandhiji also stayed. The lady is now in England, but has written that I can ever use a room in her flat whenever I am in Paris.

2-8-37. This flat is a very old fashioned one—may be a hundred years. But it is very well situated. The Paris Observatory is only a few yards away and just behind there is a church gate with a garden. The Sorbonne University is very close too. We take our breakfast, lunch and dinner in a vegetarian hotel near by. The French lodgings do not make provision for bath-rooms, and a bath in a public bath hotel means 8 annas. But yesterday I had a very good one. They keep these bath-rooms so neat and clean, and we get plenty of hot and cold water. The weather is very much like Bangalore. But it will soon get cooler and Mons. J. H. is ordering more warm clothing.

On the very day of my arrival was the opening of the Philosophical Congress. Bergson, being ill, sent a message. The University buildings are constructed with great artistic taste. The auditorium, so tastefully decorated with paintings on the wall, has also many fine sculptured statues of master minds of French thought and life. The President of the Republic, the Minister of Education and many prominent men of Paris were present. It was a strange sight for me to note that the President sat only with the common public. He took a seat in the first row. On the platform only the delegates sat. It was very pleasant to see the democratic spirit—

where the President of the Republic and the citizens of the Republic are all on the same footing. But the President was shown all honours. When he entered the hall, the French National Anthem "La Marseilles" was playing and all the audience stood. Mons. Paul Valery who is considered to be the Tagore of France made a long speech, followed by the reading of Bergson's letter, and then Sir (now Lord) Herbert Samuel from England made a very impressive speech. Lord Samuel was continuously cheered. The French are very emotional and boisterously clap hands as we do. Lord Samuel made constant references to the advancement of the Philosophie thought of the world by French thinkers, and this Mons. J. H. said was the cause of such loud acclamations.

As all speeches were in French, we came out and had a long walk, seeing the Pantheon, Notre Dame, Napoleon's bridge, the place where he is entombed, the Louis Palace of the Bourbons (it is a mile in length or perhaps more), Les Tuilleries, etc.

Yesterday we all dined along with Dr. E.—s. Both are allopathic doctors. The wife is very devoted, and belongs to the close circle of Sri Guru Maharaji's devotees here. They have discovered another devotee whom even Mons. J. H. did not know till yesterday personally. It is about this Mons. M. S. and his wife that Mons. J. H. wrote to me to Port Said telling that I would be very comfortably lodged. They have got very fresh quarters and they received us yesterday with great feelings of joy. They have been anxiously expecting to be in company of some of us. They are now remodelling a room and bathroom to suit my convenience, making special adjustment of electric lights. They have purchased a fresh bed for me. They seem to be very pious. The husband is very good, and the wife, still better. They are about 60 years old. They have got about 6 rooms. The lady does not know one word of English. She told Mons. J. H. that she must herself do all the washing of clothes for me, and would never permit it to be given to the laundry. As she is hale and hearty she wants to do the service. In this house there is a bathroom, and it is in modern style. There is also extra electric heating arrangement. The

husband has good intellectual tastes, so also the lady perhaps. Mons. M. S. told me that the French are highly intellectual and logical, and at the same time emotional, and that they have not found a method of approach to integrate these two aspects of their character. Vedanta and the Life of Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) and Swamiji will be the best method to solve their problem. This gentleman has been attending the Bhuddhist group meetings. But he says all these groups dwindled away for want of a full time worker. Mons. M. S. told me so touchingly in broken English that if at any time I found Paris life dull, I can easily go to a fine country house they own fifty miles from Paris, near the mountains. He said that he has written to the keeper of the house to keep one room ever ready for me. Sri Guru Maharaj's hand I feel everywhere, and may He guide me and make me fit to accept all this hospitality in His name. I was very much touched when Mons. M. S. told Mons. J. H. in French, to be communicated to me, "In the physical plane we will treat the Swami as our son, and in the spiritual plane, as our teacher."

Yesterday morning we had an invitation for tea from Mme. M., who came to Mysore and Bangalore in 1934. I saw her at Bangalore twice. She is a very cultured lady, and lives in a decent flat. That place and the house I now live in are the places for every Indian. No Indian will get stranded in Paris. Mme. M. puts on Indian dress at home. The note of confidence in her face is the challenge to the modern world.

Just to move round the Exhibition grounds, and see from outside the buildings put up by each nationality, it took us 3 hours. I have got a free ticket to move round for 10 days more. It is very taxing to walk round and study, and I mean doing it bit by bit. It seems they had to spend 10 million pounds to put up the pavillions and arrange the exhibits. It has surpassed the Chicago Fair of 1936. Coloured fountains as in Kannambadi play in the middle, and on both sides there are sky-scraper pavillions, and at the head of the fountains there is a huge tower like the Osterlcy monument. That is the tower of Peace. That looks like a moc-

kery when bombs are exploding in the neighbouring country. But to have conceived this idea of peace when Europe is being threatened with *Ashanti*, is a marvel of French imagination.

The Exhibition is a tremendous affair. To take one round means more than four miles. Each country has a huge pavillion. Please look into any of the European magazines and you will have an idea through pictures. The exhibition centres round Eiffel Tower. I only saw yesterday the building put up by Egypt. There I saw many old curious relics of the past, as well as the modern developments that country is making in its quick march towards modernisation. But the most impressive building is put up by U.S.S.R. There are two colossal statues on the top of a sky-scraper building, representing a peasant man and woman with hammer and sickle in hand.

By 3 we came to the 'varsity' but found that Mr. V. S. will speak only at 5 p.m. So we moved round. Almost all the proceedings are in French. I found in one section a famous professor speaking like an orator with much effect on Biology, Causality and Determinism. In each section there were 30 or 40 or 50 people attending, besides a floating population.

#### Flood Relief in Orissa

The Acting Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission has issued the following appeal :-

In connection with the flood relief work in Orissa, we beg to announce that our workers have opened two centres at Delang and Pipli. In the first distribution from Delang, there were 794 recipients from 391 families of 25 villages, and the amount of rice distribution was 35 maunds, 33 seers. Hundreds of poor villagers having lost their huts, are passing days on embankments in rains. Help towards hut-building will be necessary as soon as flood completely subsides. Failure of crop is also apprehended, and then there will be severe scarcity of food. We therefore appeal to the generous public to contribute their mite and thus save thousands from starvation and death. Any contribution, however small, will be received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O., Belur Math., Dt. Howrah.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

दमस्तेजो वर्धयति पवित्रं दम उच्यते । विपाप्मा निर्भयो दान्तः पुरुषो विन्दते महत् ॥  
तेषां लिङ्गानि वक्ष्यामि येषां समुदयो दमः । अक्रापण्यमसंरभः सन्तोषः श्रद्धानता ॥  
अक्रोध आर्जवं नित्यं नातिवादोऽतिमानिता । गुरुपूजानमूया च दया भूतेष्व पेशुनम् ॥  
जनवादमृषावादस्तुतिनिन्दाविवर्जनम् । साधुक्रामांश्चस्पृहयेत् नायति प्रत्ययेषु च ॥  
अवैरकृत् सूपचारः सभोनिन्दाप्रसंसयोः । सुवृत्तः शीलसम्पन्नः प्रसन्नात्माऽत्मवान् शुचिः ॥  
सर्वभूतहिते युक्तो न स्म यो द्विषते जनम् । महाहृद इवाक्षोभ्यः प्राज्ञस्तपतः प्रसीदति ॥  
अभयं यस्य भूतेषु सर्वेषामभयं यतः । नमस्यः सर्वभूतानां दान्तो भवति बुद्धिमान् ॥  
नहृष्यति महत्यर्थे व्यसने न च शोचति । सदाऽपरिमितप्रज्ञः स दान्तो द्विज उच्यते ॥

Self-control is declared purifying and it enhances power. A man having it is devoid of sin and fear, and is on the way to the Highest. The terms that constitute the conception of *Dama* are magnanimity, amiability, humility, contentment, peaceableness, unswerving faith, undeviating veracity and sparing talk. A self-controlled man has reverence for elders and gives no room for envy. He is benevolent to all creatures. He has left behind wickedness, and never repeats rumours and lying reports. Flattery and detraction are far from him. He would harbour only ennobling desires and at no time hangs on future promises. He is perfectly polite and breeds no hatred. Same in praise and blame, and steady in the observance of moral laws, his character is free from all blame. He is tranquil, self-possessed and pure. He is ever active for the good of others and never bears malice to any. Like a profound imperturbable lake, the self-contented wise man rests in calm. He is neither the source nor the victim of fear. He commands homage from all beings, and is never puffed up by prosperity or pulled down by anxiety. Vast in his intelligence, the man who is his own master is known as a regenerate one.

Mahabharata, Santi, Ch. 225, verses 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16.

## CAN THERE BE A UNIVERSAL RELIGION?

[In the following paragraphs we have discussed in brief the forces that work on the one hand towards differences and on the other towards uniformity, in religious symbology.]

### I

**I**N the last number we pointed out that religious universalism can never be based upon a mathematical conception of religious truth. A religious doctrine is said to convey truth not in the sense that a mathematical proposition, scientific law, or a historical fact is said to do the same, but in the sense that in a person who is sufficiently receptive to it, it can produce an experience of a universal type, having a fundamental bearing on the totality of existence. In other words, the truth embodied in religions is symbolic, by which we mean that its validity depends not so much in the statement of it in itself as in an inexpressible something which it purports to suggest through the devices of language, ritual and philosophical concepts it employs. Definiteness, or the capacity to be defined exactly by words or measured by the pointer-reading instruments of the scientist, is the characteristic of material things, *i.e.*, of things possessing boundaries. A subject of our study may be said to be spiritual in proportion to its tendency to defy the limitations of definitions and of all devices for measurement.

Even leaving aside religion for the time being, the truth of this is borne out by entities like matter, life and mind, and the respective sciences dealing with their study. The study of living cells is much more elusive than that of matter, and that of mind still more so. Hence physics and chemistry are the most definite of sciences, while biology is so only to a much

less extent, and psychology is often refused even the name of science because of the indefiniteness of its conceptions. When we come to the level of morality and aesthetics, we pass still more from the field of measurements and definitions, and feel the necessity of suggestive symbolism for conveying ideas. And since symbols are largely subjective and depend for their meaning on the interpretative activity of the mind, unanimity is as a rule impossible of attainment in these subjects.

In the case of religion this feature becomes still more prominent. For religion deals with the deepest reality in man, namely, the spirit, which, being the antipode of matter, is least susceptible to definition and measurement. But the concepts we employ in all branches of our thought have their genesis in our experience of things material, and we are under the limitation of using these very concepts for conveying our ideas regarding the spirit too. Thus when we speak of the spirit as infinite, we think of the vastness of the sky or the ocean; when we speak of it as subtle and permeating everything, we think of atmosphere, or ether, or any other fine entity that is everywhere; when we speak of God as all-powerful, the image of a despotic king whose will is law rises before us; and when we speak of Him as all-love, we think in terms of our own father, mother or some other beloved person without any of his or her human weakness. In the same way we think of the soul as a spark broken off from

the great fire of spirit, of creation as a projection of His being or as a clay modelling by His deft fingers, of incarnation as the Son of God, and so we go on employing the language of our physical life in all our conceptions of the spirit.

It is this tendency to think of spiritual entities in terms of human life that goes by the name of anthropomorphism. Such habits of thought are not in themselves wrong, nay, they are necessary even, as they form the only way for us to progress towards higher experiences of the spirit. But the trouble arises when man forgets what it actually is—forgets that the language employed here is only symbolic, and that its real value lies in its suggestiveness, and not in its form. For when we take all the dogmas of religion at their face value, like scientific propositions and historical facts, then, in place of a religion which forms the science of the spirit, we get a hocus-pocus of dead concepts which become an encumbrance on the human mind in place of being a help to the realisation of our higher self. In place of breadth of outlook, religion, under these circumstances, begets fanaticism in the human mind; in place of love for all, it fosters party spirit of the worst kind; in place of the spirit of renunciation, it creates a sense of vested interest in thought; and in place of the God of truth, the Father and Mother of all that exists, it offers the god of a tribe, community, nation or race for the adoration of the pious. Thus when man forgets the symbolic nature of religious doctrines, these doctrines cease to be the vehicles of a dynamic gospel, always reminding him of their self-transcendence, and revealing to him newer and newer shades of meaning of which the

words and forms in which they are couched form only the occasion.

To one who fails to understand this symbolic nature of all religious doctrines, the only form of religious universalism conceivable is the triumph of one form of theology over all others; for to him all other forms of theology differing from his own appear as a contradiction of truth, and therefore deserving to be subverted by his own. But if the symbolic character of religious dogmas is understood, our angle of vision changes completely. We begin to perceive that spiritual truth has many facets, that it cannot be brought within definitions or formulas, and that theologies and rituals are not to be valued so much for what they are in themselves as for the experience they are capable of imparting through their suggestiveness. There is then no question of contradiction between religions—of one religion alone being true and all others being false. For inspite of their differences in form, their meaning in terms of religious experience is the same, just as different systems of music are the same from the point of view of the æsthetic experience they give in spite of their wide differences in form. Religious universalism then becomes the acceptance of all religions as true.

## II

In this connection there arises the question of the place of missionary effort in the light of this conception of religious universalisms. The moral impulse behind the missionary enterprise of the Semitic religions, namely, Islam and Christianity, has mainly come from a notion of the utter falsity of all other religions, and of a keen sense of the tragedy of souls

wallowing in their untruth without any chance of being saved. Now if religions come to accept the symbolic nature of their doctrines, and the consequent capacity of each to bring its followers to their highest spiritual destiny, then the missionary motive of the kind described above can no longer sway the mind of man. It has therefore been pertinently asked how a religion like Hinduism, which accepts this symbolic nature of religious truth, can undertake any missionary activity in consistency with its teaching that all religions are true. If all religions are true, why take the trouble of preaching your religion to others? If other religions are as much capable of conferring salvation on their followers as your own, what reason can you have for conveying the message of your religion to others?

No doubt the old type of motive for missionary enterprise can no longer exist in a mind convinced of the truth of all religions. Nor can it adopt the usual missionary method of making conversion into a kind of business, and estimating the success of one's preaching by counting the number of converts. In the light of the conception we have been trying to elaborate, the aim of the preacher is not to fight other religions or prove their falsity. His aims and methods are completely different. He cannot make a distinction between the missionary and the saint, between the preacher and the man of God. He needs combine in himself the qualities of both, for his function is not to disturb the faith of others by his logic and eloquence, but to enrich their spiritual life by the positive quality of his own life and personality.

In the first place this truly spiritual and catholic conception of religion has to be placed before a world that has been educated into limited and materialistic notions of it by a narrow priesthood. It is only when people understand the true nature of religion, that they will grasp the full significance of their particular religions. Thus a missionary of the right type will not attempt to convert a person from one religion to another, but will help him to become a better follower of his own religion. He will, in other words, make a Hindu a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Buddhist a better Buddhist.

In the next place he can be of service to many people who have for some reason or other lost all faith in the religions they are born in, and are therefore in search of some presentation of the higher truths in a way more appealing to them. If the function of religious doctrines is to serve as symbols for imparting a certain pattern of experience, then they become useless for a man when they cease to convey any meaning to him for some reason or other. For example, when a man grows intellectually and ethically, the symbols that used to appeal to him once, cease to do so any more. Either his intellect revolts against them, or his ethical sense finds itself irreconcilable to it. When a man loses respect for a symbol either because he misunderstands it or because he has become too refined for it, he can no longer feel any veneration for it, and draw from it the sustenance needed for the growth of his spiritual life. Under such circumstances there are only two alternatives left. We may make a clean sweep of all the old traditions, and pre-

sent a system of ideas and symbols entirely new to the culture of the man concerned. But the better method will be to infuse higher meanings into these old symbols by clever devices of interpretation, and thus level up the old to the intellectual and moral eminence of their followers in later times. Religious symbols are very often an accommodation of the old to the new, especially seeing that before anything becomes sacred it must have the sanction of ages. The need of this kind of adjustment will therefore be always felt in the field of religion. Thus, even in the interests of their followers, every religion requires new interpretation, and this can be facilitated by the stimulating influence of other systems of thought. A missionary who preaches his religion in a foreign country or culture out of a pure spirit of service and the liberal motive we have described before, can be of immense help in this religious adjustment. He can present before men of alien culture the inspiring personalities of his own religious tradition, some of his rituals that are of universal appeal, and above all, his philosophy of life which may light up for them many a crooked path in the realm of thought, and show solutions for those very problems, the lack of which might till then have been the chief reason for their not showing any intelligent interest in religion. Thus in addition to helping them in a re-interpretation of their faith, he may also enrich their religion with some elements that are the characteristic features of the religious experience of his own race.

### III

In an age like the present when a cosmopolitan culture seems to be

developing such friendly and mutually appreciative form of missionary contact between religions is especially a great desideratum. In spite of all the great differences and antipathies between the different cultures and races of the world, it cannot be denied that they are at present being more and more brought into contact with one another. The very conflicts and antagonisms between cultures and races at the present time is only a conservative reaction of men to the new world tendencies to which they are becoming suddenly awakened. In the past, cultures could remain aloof and develop their distinctiveness because difficulties of communication segregated people inhabiting areas marked by distinct natural barriers. But the modern methods of communication have made this world very small indeed, and in spite of man's desire to remain in his own little shell, he is by force, as it were, subjected to the cultural influences radiating from all parts of the world. As a result, the destinies of the different countries are inter-linked to-day more than at any other time in the history of our planet, and in spite of all the resistances we notice on the part of people, we see to-day at work a tendency to bring about uniformity between different parts of the world in the matter of government, business methods, military organisation, language, dress, food and all other matters relating to collective and individual life.

Can religion alone resist this tendency and survive in isolation, apart from the cosmopolitan influences of the times? The obvious answer is 'no'. In the past the appeal of particular religious symbols could be localised, because, as in all



other branches of culture, religions too developed in isolation from one another. But when, through literature and through close personal contacts, people come to have a knowledge and appreciation of one another's religious symbols, the way will be open for greater cosmopolitanism in religion—for the growth of a religious symbology, intellectual and ritualistic, which, while having its roots in the religious traditions of the past, will rise above their particularity born of their growth in cultural isolation, and will have a universal appeal to the human heart. This of course is not what is usually known as eclecticism. For eclecticism is an artificial piecing up of doctrines arbitrarily broken off from their cultural context, and consequently it lacks woefully in spiritual vitality, in spite of all the intellectual appeal it may have to some minds. But the sort of universal religious symbolisms that are likely


to grow as a result of the cosmopolitan influences of modern times would be a natural growth from within, even like the particular religious symbols of the present-day world religions; but their only difference would be that their appeal would have much wider range, as they would themselves be the product of the clash and interaction of the cultures of a wider humanity. In the growth of these religious symbols the spiritual heritage of various races and people would play their due part, according to their capacity to appeal to the heart and head of a humanity that is becoming accustomed to measure the religious concepts and symbols placed before it with a standard more exacting than in the past. What the possible contribution of Hindu religious traditions to the universal religious symbolisms of the future, we shall consider in the next issue.

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## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

 ONE day the Mother lay on her bed while Kanini, the maid, rubbed her knee with a medicinal oil for rheumatism. The Mother said to me, "The body is one thing and the soul another. The soul pervades the whole body; therefore I have been feeling the pain in my leg. If I should withdraw my mind from the

knee, then I would not feel any pain there."

Referring to initiation by *Mantram*, I said to her, "Mother, what's the need of taking the *Mantram* from a teacher? Suppose a man does not repeat his *Mantram*; will it not do for him if he simply repeats, 'Mother Kali, Mother Kali'?"

Mother : The *Mantram* purifies the body. Man becomes pure by repeating the *Mantram* of God. Listen to a story. One day Narada went to *Vaikuntha*<sup>1</sup> to see the Lord and had a long conversation with Him. Narada had not, at that time, been initiated. After Narada left the place the Lord said to *Lakshmi*,<sup>2</sup> 'Purify the place with cow-dung.' 'Why, Lord?' asked Lakshmi, 'Narada is your great devotee. Why, then, do you say this?' The Lord said, 'Narada has not, as yet, received his initiation. The body cannot be pure without initiation.'

"One should accept the *Mantram* from a *Guru* at least for the purification of the body. The *Vaishnava*, after initiating the disciple, says to him, 'Now all depends upon your mind'. It is said, 'The human teacher utters the *Mantram* into the ear; but God breathes the spirit into the soul.' Everything depends upon one's mind. Nothing can be achieved without purity of mind. It is said, 'The aspirant has received the grace of the *Guru*, Krishna, and the *Vaishnava*; but he comes to grief without the grace of *One*.' That one is the mind. The mind of the aspirant should be gracious to him."

Disciple : But, Mother, I have no inclination for *Japam*, austerities and the like.

Mother : Perhaps you have gone through these in your previous birth.

It was a time of intense nationalistic activity in Bengal. I asked the Mother, "Mother! Will not our country ever be free from suffering and affliction?" "Our Master," said

the Mother, "was born, no doubt, for that."

Referring to her own mother, the Holy Mother said, "My mother used to be beside herself with joy when one of my devotees came to our place. She would exclaim, 'Ah! My grandchild has come!' She would look after him with great tenderness. She looked upon this family as her own blood, as it were. She took great pains to keep everything in proper order. Her name was Shyama<sup>3</sup>."

Continuing the Holy Mother said, "When the Master passed away, I also wanted to go. He appeared before me and said, 'No, you must remain here. There are many things to be done.' I myself realised later on that this was true; I had so many things to do. The Master used to say, 'The people of Calcutta live like worms swarming in darkness. You will look after them.' He said that he would live for three hundred years, in a subtle body, in the hearts of the devotees. He further said that he would have many devotees among white people.

"After the passing away of the Master, I was at first greatly frightened, for I used to put on<sup>4</sup> a *Sarce* with thin red borders and wear gold bangles on my wrist, which made me afraid of peoples' criticism. Gradually I got rid of that fear. One day the Master appeared before me and asked me to feed him with *Kichuri*.<sup>5</sup> I cooked the dish and

<sup>3</sup> Shyama—She passed away in February, 1906.

<sup>4</sup> Put on, etc.—Hindu widows, according to the injunction of religion, are required to put on a white *Sarce* without any border and to give up all ornaments.

<sup>5</sup> *Kichuri*—An Indian dish made of rice, split pulse and butter,

<sup>1</sup> Vaikuntha—Paradise.

<sup>2</sup> Lakshmi—The Divine Consort of the Lord.

offered it before Raghuvir<sup>6</sup> in the Temple. Then I mentally fed the Master with it.

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Referring to Jogin Maharaj,<sup>7</sup> the Mother said, "Nobody loved me like Jogin. If anyone gave him eight annas, he would put it aside, saying, 'My Mother will want to make a pilgrimage. She will need it then for her expenses.' He attended on me constantly."

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About herself she said, "Balaram Babu used to refer to me as the 'great ascetic, the embodiment of forbearance'. Can you call him a man who is devoid of compassion? He is a veritable beast. Sometimes I forget myself in compassion. Then I do not remember who I am."

Finally the Holy Mother said to me, "I have never before spoken to anyone as freely as I have to you. See me in Calcutta and live with me."

At that time I lived in the world with my people though I had been cherishing an intense desire to embrace the monastic life. I said to myself, 'Perhaps in the future it will be possible for me, through her grace, to be a monk and live near her.'

When I was in Jayarambati, Radhu's mother<sup>8</sup> was mentally deranged. She had taken Radhu's jewellery to her father's house and the father had snatched them away from her. That made her even more distracted. On her return to Jayarambati, Radhu's mother wept in the

temple of Shimbavahini<sup>9</sup> for the jewellery. It was dusk. I was talking to the Holy Mother in her room when suddenly she said to me, "My child! I must go now. That crazy sister-in-law of mine has none else to call her own but myself. She is weeping before the Deity for the jewellery." With these words, the Mother left the room. But I could not hear any sound of weeping, nor was it possible to do so at such a distance; yet she had heard the voice. She returned with Radhu's mother. The latter said to her, "Oh, sister-in-law! You have put away my jewellery. You have deprived me of them." The Mother said, "Had these ornaments belonged to me then I would have thrown them away, at once, like the filth of a crow." Referring to Radhu's mother, she said to me "Girish used to say that she was my mad companion."

At first I used to hesitate to address the Holy Mother as 'Mother.' My own mother had died during my childhood. One morning the Holy Mother sent me to a certain person on an errand. As I was about to leave, she asked me, "What will you say to him?" I said, 'Why? I shall say to him, 'She asked me to tell you.''" "No, my child," said the Holy Mother, "tell him, 'The Mother asked me to tell you.'" She emphasized the word 'Mother'.

One morning I was reading aloud to the Mother and several devotees on the porch of the Holy Mother's room. I was reading a life of Sri Ramakrishna written in verse. In the chapter on her marriage with Sri Ramakrishna, the author eulogised her

<sup>6</sup> Raghuvir—An epithet for Rama, the family Deity of Sri Ramakrishna.

<sup>7</sup> Jogin—A disciple of the Master, known later on as Swami Yogananda.

<sup>8</sup> Radhu's mother—Radhu was the niece (brother's daughter) of the Holy Mother.

<sup>9</sup> Shimbavahini—An aspect of the Divine Mother of the universe.

greatly and referred to her as 'The Mother of the Universe.' As I read that passage, the Mother left the porch. A few minutes earlier I had read to her from *Udbodhana*<sup>10</sup> in which was published a portion of the Gospel of the Master by M. No one else was present then. I had been reading the following passage :

Girish : I have a desire.

Master : What is it ?

Girish : I want love of God for the sake of love.

Master : That kind of love is possible only for the *Iswarakotis*<sup>11</sup>. Ordinary men cannot achieve it.

I asked the Holy Mother, "What does the Master mean by that ?"

Mother : The *Iswarakotis* have all their desires fulfilled in God (*Purna-Kama*). Therefore they have no worldly desires. Love for the sake

of Divine Love is not possible as long as a man has any desire.

Disciple : Mother, do your own brothers belong to the same level as these *Iswarakotis* ?

I thought that as they were born as her own brothers they must have the same spiritual unfoldment as the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. At this the Mother simply looked scornful, as if to say, 'What a comparison ! What can one achieve by simply being my brother ? To be the intimate disciple of the Master is quite a different thing !'

One morning, the Holy Mother was assisting in husking paddy. It was, practically, her daily job. I asked her, "Mother ! Why should you work so hard ?" "My child," said she in reply, "I have done much more than is necessary to make my life a model."

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## REASON AND RELIGION

By Prof. Rasvihari Das, M.A., Ph.D.

[Dr. Das is the Professor of Metaphysics and Indian Philosophy in the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. In the following review of Prof. Macmurray's conception of religion, he discusses some important problems connected with the relation of religion to reason and to social activities.]

PROFESSOR John Macmurray of the University of London is regarded by some, so I am told, as the hope of idealism in England. Whether idealism as a philosophic theory is going to have a renewed life in that country, and that through the efforts of Professor Macmurray, I cannot really say. But I can certainly say without hesitation that among

the writers on philosophy now living in England Professor Macmurray is one of the most remarkable and original. He does not concern himself so much with problems that seem to occupy the attention of most other academic philosophers of England of to-day. He is not over-anxious to determine correctly whether what we actually see of a physical object is

<sup>10</sup> *Udbodhana*—A monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Mission in the Bengali language.

<sup>11</sup> *Iswarakotis*—The perfected souls who are born with an Incarnation of God as helpers in His mission.

really identical with or only similar to the physical object itself ; whether, for example, the familiar table which we seem to see directly is the table itself or something else which is partly or wholly different from it.

Evidently he does not regard the problems of perception to be the most important problems of philosophy. The real problems of philosophy are certainly far more serious than the question whether what we take to be round is really round or somewhat elliptical, and it is questions like this with which contemporary British philosophy is mostly concerned. It does not appear to be generally realised that the reality which impresses us through our sense-perception, although undecivable, is literally superficial, and the problems about it, though deserving of philosophic consideration, are not among the most vital problems of our life which philosophers have to solve. We are far more vitally concerned to know the nature of our own being and its place and function in the universe than the nature of the physical object. Professor Macmurray's philosophic endeavours seem to be guided by a proper realisation of this fact.

While much of contemporary philosophy in England hovers about the outskirts of science, Professor Macmurray has the distinction to raise it up to the higher altitudes of art and religion. Many people would think that science is the knowledge of reality *par excellence* ; but in Professor Macmurray's estimation, science occupies a low place in the scale of our knowledge of reality. At least this is what he has tried to make out in his work *Reason and Emotion*. In his opinion we get better knowledge of reality in art and religion

than in science. He may or may not be right in all his contentions, but we cannot deny that 'unlike many philosophers, he is moving,' as he says of Whitehead, 'in the right universe of discourse'. It will be interesting to know what this thinker has to say about religion.

It is customary to suppose that reason has no scope in religion which is peculiarly bound up with the emotional side of our life. This position rests on a view of reason which makes it opposed to emotion. Professor Macmurray flatly denies any such opposition between reason and emotion. Reason would be opposed to emotion if reason were identified with intellect. But there is no ground for supporting that reason is merely intellectual. Rationality is the differentia of humanity and whatever is 'distinctive of human nature and belongs to human nature alone' should be considered as rational. Art and religion are as distinctive of the nature of man as science and philosophy, and they should be therefore regarded as quite as good expressions of rationality as anything else.

Our rationality finds different expressions as it relates itself to the different fields in the objective world. There are three general fields in the world to which we stand in conscious objective relation, the fields of matter, life and personality. "It is this three-fold character of the objective world which determines the three-fold expressions of rationality. Science grows out of our rationality in relation to material things. Art grows out of our relation to living beings. Religion grows out of our relation to persons".\*

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\* 'Reason and Emotion,' p. 196.

When we are in the material field our rationality finds expression in our capacity to make and use tools. The only rational use we can make of matter is to make it an instrument to serve our purposes. And in order to use matter successfully for our own purposes we have to acquaint ourselves with the laws of its behaviour. This leads to the creation of science. This is how science is an expression of our rational nature in relation to matter.

When however we have to relate ourselves to another person, a being like ourselves, we are in a new field altogether, the field of personality, which is entirely different from the field of matter. Everybody knows that to deal with a person is not the same thing as to deal with matter. The expression of our rationality in the personal field will therefore be characteristically different from the expression of rationality in the material field. If science is the expression of rationality in the material field, religion is the expression of rationality in the personal field. Professor Macmurray is able to make two important points in this connection. The one is that religion is a fuller expression of rationality than science, and the other is that religion is inherent in human nature.

Religion is a fuller expression of rationality than science, because science expresses our rationality in relation to material bodies which are *not* persons, whereas religion expresses our rationality in relation to persons who *are also* material bodies. This argument does not appear to me to be very sound, first, because our personal relationships are not simply more than, but radically dif-

ferent from, the relations of material things which are studied by science, and, secondly, because in our personal relations we are scarcely conscious of bodily relations. The real ground for supposing religion to be a better expression of rationality, as Professor Macmurray himself has pointed out, lies in the fact that rationality, being a defining characteristic of persons, can express its nature fully only in 'the full relation of one rational being to another.'

Religion being only an expression of our rationality in relation to persons, it is impossible to deny religion without denying our rationality. We have to be in relation with other persons in order to realise our own personality, and we shall cease to be men in the proper sense of the term, if we sacrifice our rationality in relation to other men. We may reject this or that form of religion as inadequate, but we cannot reject religion as such.

Let us now see wherein lies the peculiar rationality of our personal relationship. What distinguishes the relation of one person to another from other relations is its *mutuality*. I am in a personal relationship with another only when the other is my equal. The drive to rationality, therefore, in the personal field expresses itself in our impulse to achieve equality and fellowship. "The primary religious assertion is that all men are equal and that fellowship is the only relation between persons which is fully rational or fully appropriate to their nature as persons." \*

We must be grateful to Professor Macmurray for his splendid effort to

\*Reason and Emotion,' p. 230.

demonstrate the rational character of our religious experience ; and his endeavour to show that religion is not a matter of occasional observance, but a fundamental activity of human life, which does not involve a turning away from this world to another, deserves all praise. But still we do not feel convinced that he has succeeded in bringing out the essential character of religious experience.

A religious man, a saint, for instance, may make no distinction between man and man. But when we merely know that all men are equal, does it amount to any religious experience or knowledge for us ? A man of religion no doubt is friendly towards all men, but when we are merely in the best of personal relationship with all men with whom we come into contact, do we thereby achieve any religion at all ? There seems to be some truth in the familiar view that religion involves a turning away from this world. The relationship of love and friendship with all men may follow as a consequence from a right relationship with God,

in which religion consists, and cannot be simply equated with it. It is only when all earthly loves fail that we turn to God. So long as we are seeking only earthly means to satisfy our earthly or bodily needs, it is idle to pretend that we are practising any religion. Religion, as we understand it, is a spiritual endeavour to satisfy spiritual needs by some spiritual means. Those needs and their satisfaction seem to have no necessary reference to the conditions of material existence. Our social activities may form part of our religion when they are pursued in that spirit, but social activities merely as such can scarcely claim the name of religion in any distinctive sense of the term. No experience however exalted can be accounted religious unless it is accompanied by a consciousness of God, i.e., of some spiritual being higher than we, and our relation to it. I do not see that such consciousness is necessarily present when we are in communion and fellowship with other finite beings who are only our equals.

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## YOGA IN THE WEST

*By F. B. Marsom*

[Mr. F. B. Marsom is the President of a Yoga Society in England. In this short article he shows what aspects of India's spiritual traditions are likely to be serviceable in the religious life of Great Britain to-day. It is also noteworthy that his article reveals how the West recognises in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, the link between it and Indian spiritual ideals.]

S Chairman of a small Society of Yoga in England, I am naturally keenly interested in the introduction of the principles of Yoga into this country, but I do not think that the fundamental attitude of the average Englishman in England is

fully realised in the East. Many Europeans have studied Eastern philosophies and religions, and have made contacts in the East ; but such students have been savants and philosophers, whose studies have inevitably broadened their minds and widen-

ed their understanding of peoples of different races and religions. Their attitude must not be regarded as typical of the *average* English attitude.

The average Englishman has inherited three main tendencies : (1) A Puritan strain dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; (2) A materialistic strain dating from the Victorian epoch ; and (3) a conservative strain due largely to the insularity of his country.

The Puritan tendency has taken all the joy out of religion, and has marked it down as a matter remote from everyday life, and only to be brought out on the special day appointed for its consideration.

The materialistic strain has taken much of the spirituality out of religion, and has replaced it by a broad Humanism which teaches that duty to one's neighbour is the highest ideal: such an ideal appears easy to grasp, and calls for no consideration of any basic principles or abstract truths.

The conservative element has strengthened this disinclination to probe into the theories and principles of religious belief. Unorthodox opinions—except on purely atheistic biological grounds—are regarded as 'bad form,' to say the least. The man who feels the call of religion must take it as he finds it. Any original thought on the subject is deprecated.

Organised religion adopts the same attitude ; it bases itself on dogma, and lays more stress on the ethical and political side of life than on the purely spiritual. It welcomes the faithful, but has no thought of assisting doubters and enquirers to acquire faith. The encouraging fact is that, despite this general attitude, the average man is at heart deeply religious.

He feels that without true religion he is missing the best part of life. In desperation he often turns to Christian Science or Spiritualism and possibly finds some solace ; but a large number try in vain, and finally lose heart and give up the search, or else merely continue to pay lip-service to a religion which they are not allowed or encouraged to understand, and which consequently does not fulfil their deepest needs.

Thus there are millions in this country whose religious sense is atrophied: they have no *definitely formulated* ideas on religion nor do they even realise that it calls for study and concentration to a much greater extent than do purely secular subjects. They are not antagonistic, but willing and anxious to learn if the subject is presented to them with a full appreciation of their tendencies and hereditary background.

To such as these Yoga would be the key to a new understanding and appreciation of Life, but it must be given to them as an extension of the orthodox belief into which they are born, rather than as an entirely new religion. Anything 'new' always has an ephemeral success amongst the small class who always hanker after novelty, but it does not attract the majority. I am using the word 'Yoga' as a generic title for the main teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda as I have understood them ; and the following are, I think, the main points to be stressed :

1. The principle of intellectual assent as a preliminary to true understanding.
2. The pre-eminence of spirituality.
3. The conception of religion as an integral part of everyday life.



4. The possibility and necessity of systematic spiritual training.
5. The meaning of true prayer—*i.e.*, meditation.
6. The universality of religions.

As regards the first point, the average man must be persuaded that it is *not* irreligious to question the fundamental beliefs of his religion, to ask himself for what purpose he came into the world, what is the cause of good and evil, what is really meant by 'atonement,' 'salvation,' 'regeneration' and 'redemption,' to take but a few of the catchwords of religion. He must be shown that inability to accept a faith blindly is the first step on the road to progress if it leads to conscious enquiry and investigation: it is not, as so many think, a bar to self-development.

The second lesson of Yoga is of fundamental importance, although some modification of the Eastern attitude appears called for. Christ's teaching was two-fold—"Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour". The East stresses the first part, and looks upon the second, as far as it applies to social reform and material help, as of little importance. The West is obsessed by the second, and pays little heed to the first. The Church busies itself with politics, with the League of Nations, with housing and other social problems, and pays more attention to this world than the next. Little wonder, therefore, that the worship of God for God's sake is barely realised!

The necessity for the third lesson arises mainly from the Puritan element in the English character. The Puritans never realised the essential

meaning of the New Testament as a Gospel of Love; their God remained the Jewish Jehovah, a God of fear, and they based their lives on the Mosaic dispensation, rather than the Christian. The Sabbath was set apart for awed worship of God, and this tendency to set apart one day in the week wholly to religion still persists; and as a corollary has come the impression that it is definitely wrong to mix religion, or thoughts of God, with everyday life. The Puritans, moreover, looked upon God as an outside agency, and modern teaching does not sufficiently stress the saying that 'The kingdom of God is within you', an error which the Yoga teaching that we are all part of the One can alone correct.

As I explained earlier, the modern Church offers its followers no spiritual training. It does not, in fact, realise that such training is possible. It exhorts its members to 'have Faith', and teaches that Faith will come with prayer—spontaneously—an experience which the mystically-minded may attain, but which is beyond the hope of the average man. The latter finds himself in a quandary: he must have Faith before he can pray conscientiously, and he can only attain this Faith by prayer.

Here, also, we meet the peculiar Western attitudes towards prayer. My Dictionary gives two definitions of the word 'Prayer': 1. The earnest asking for a favour, and 2. A turning of one's soul in reverence, infinite desire, and endeavour to what is highest and best. There is no doubt whatever that the average man has the first conception of prayer rather than the second. The English Prayer Book is full of prayers for all pur-

poses, and on every suitable occasion special prayers are published for guidance for the League of Nations, for success in whatever special endeavour may be in hand, or even for purely material blessings such as relief from drought, or improvement of housing conditions. I do not wish to belittle the aims or integrity of those who sponsor such prayers, but there is no doubt that the average man comes to regard prayers as purely petitional in character. The idea of prayer of the second category, as a 'Communion with God', is not taught and emphasised as it should be. The truly devout have this correct conception of prayer: but they have reached their position by instinct rather than by definite instruction, and they have no idea that such instruction is available and can be given. Hence the extreme value to the Western world of the Yoga principles and methods of meditation.

The last point is the universality of religion. Christianity is still regarded as a development of Judaism; the Old Testament is taught and read in churches side by side with the New. The 'New Dispensation' of Christ is stressed to such a degree that the majority do not realise that a Gospel of Love was ever given to the world until the coming of Christ.

The ancient Wisdom Religions—Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and their like—are disregarded as 'heathen' religions, as forms of idolatry; the fact that they contain the same essential teachings as those of Christ is looked upon as incredible. The orthodox churches—whose ministers have studied Comparative Religion—are discreetly silent on the point, and preach that the only road of salvation for those of other faiths is 'conversion' to Christianity. Sri Ramakrishna practised all religions, and taught the essential universality of all religions worthy of the name. This teaching is the only antidote to the parochialism of Western Christianity, and is the greatest gift which Yoga, as I have defined it, offers to the peace and spiritual understanding of the whole world.

This short article must not be read as an attack—in even the slightest degree—on the underlying principles and teaching of Christianity, nor do I pretend that it represents the attitude of many great leaders of religious thought. It is merely an effort to show the impasse to which the *average* man in this country has been brought, and to indicate the special direction in which the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda are calculated to help him out of this impasse.

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## THE FELLOWSHIP OF RELIGIONS

*Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D.*

[In this short article Dr. Jadunath Sinha, Professor of Philosophy in Meerut College, points out that a religious commonwealth based on the solid foundation of God-consciousness alone is the proper solvent for the problems of present day humanity.]

**S**RI RAMAKRISHNA lived and died for the harmony of religions. No other saint on earth emphasised it so much as he did. He realised it in his life as a living truth. He lived Hinduism as a Hindu. He lived Islam as a Muslim. He lived Christianity as a Christian. And he realised that all these religions lead to the realisation of God. His heart bled for the unity of faiths and the unity of mankind. His *Sadhana* is bearing fruit. We hear to-day of the fellowship of religions. It will usher in a new era of mutual understanding and good will. Ramakrishna was the seer of this new Truth. He was the harbinger of the New Era.

To-day the world is physically one. Time and space are being annihilated. The different parts of the world and branches of the human family are being brought into close association with one another. The world will become one spiritually also. The physical union will pave the way for spiritual union. Artificial political and economic barriers cannot resist the on-rush of a gigantic spiritual force that is sweeping the world. Barriers between man and man, nation and nation, will be broken down, and humanity will enter on a new career of spiritual conquest. Before the world becomes a political and economic commonwealth of nations inspired by a new ideal of service to humanity, a religious commonwealth of mankind shall be established based

on the mutual understanding and sympathetic appreciation of different religions. The commonwealth of religions will be established on the solid foundation of God-consciousness and fellowship of humanity.

The fundamentals of all religions are the same. They embody some eternal truths. Truth is infinite and inexhaustible. It is not the monopoly of a particular religion. Different aspects of Truth are emphasised by different religions. In different ages, in different conditions of the society, different aspects of truth are revealed to prophets and seers who communicate them to mankind. They are representative men of the age. They are concrete expressions of the time-spirit. They are living embodiments of the ideal of the age. They fulfil the cravings and aspirations of men of the time. They satisfy the hunger of the human souls. They give an impetus to the spiritual uplift of humanity. They are spiritual leaders of men. They are Elder Brothers of mankind. They are links between men and God. They lead men to God. They bring down God to men. They inspire men with God-consciousness. They impart their own living God-realisation to others. They are God-intoxicated, and intoxicate others with God-consciousness. They are the salt of the earth. But for them, the world would be a desert and a wilderness. We must recognise this simple truth. We must recognise

the brotherhood of divine men. We must love and adore them all as messengers of God.

But we must not deify them. They must not take the place of God. They are men of flesh and blood. They are born and they die. They are earnest seekers of truth. They pass through conflict and struggle. They overcome temptations of the flesh. They are men as we are. And yet they are divine men. They are seers of Truth, which is revealed to them. They are torch-bearers of Truth. They lead us to Truth. They show us the way to God. They inspire us with God-consciousness. They are our very own. To make them divine is to make them foreign to us as men. They are ideal men. To put them beyond the plane of human beings is to dehumanise them and make them inaccessible and unapproachable. They can lead humanity because they are intensely *human*. They should be loved and adored. But they should not be worshipped as God. Our spiritual aspirations must end in God who is greater than His messengers.

Humanity does not require a new religion. It requires a new orientation of religions. It requires deep religious consciousness. It requires an intense realisation of the essential divinity of man. It requires a profound consciousness of the brotherhood of man based on the fatherhood of God. This will bring about the harmony of religions which will rejuvenate humanity and lead it to a new path of historical evolution. The fellowship of faiths will be established on deep religious consciousness enlightened by reason. Feeling is the conservative element in human

nature. Reason is the radical and revolutionary element in it. Religion is more a matter of feeling than of reason. This is the reason why it tends to be dogmatic and intolerant. Religious sentiments are generated by tradition, heredity, and social environment. They are deep subconscious emotional complexes interwoven with our very nature. They are our cherished possessions. They must be brought to the level of consciousness and subjected to the scrutiny of reason. Religions must be purged of indefensible dogmas and relics of barbarity in the light of reason. Religion must cease to be irrational emotionalism. This is the age of reason. A rationalistic attitude towards life and religion is necessary for mutual understanding of religions. It will not deaden our religious sentiments. It will generate new emotions and sentiments. It will thrill every fibre of our being with intense love of God and humanity. It will inspire us with a new spirit of service to humanity.

Institutional religions must give place to the religion of spirit. The religion of forms and ceremonies must give place to the religion of the heart. The religion of man must be the religion of God as Love. The universal love of God will be the foundation of the fellowship of religions. This new religious consciousness will bridge the gulf between theory and practice. It will bring down the Kingdom of God on earth. It will create a new order. It will bring in a new civilisation. It will bring on a new human race galvanised by a new spirit of fellowship. It will make a heaven of earth. The old order is breaking to pieces. Lo ! The crash coming ! A new order is in sight.

# THE INFINITE EXCELLENCES OF SRI RAMA

(or RAMA GUNA MANASA)

By Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D.

[In the following article Dr. V. Raghavan of the Sanskrit Department of the Madras University gives a sketch of Sri Rama's character and personality. It is needless to add that for ages Sri Rama has been held before the Hindu mind as the ideal of a perfect man.]

**W**HETHER it was in the days of Ravana or whether it is in the materialistic world of to-day, all calamities of individuals and of nations are due to the inability of the individual or the leaders of thought and life to strike the balance between Dharma or Righteousness on the one hand, and Artha and Kama—material advancement and emotional gratification—on the other. Crisis occurs when Righteousness ceases to be the rule of life and when the only motive force of action on the part of persons becomes either Artha or Kama, the desire for which leads to encroachment upon the rights of others. The impulse to encroachment of this kind necessitates the devising of the necessary power and machinery to subjugate others. The power invented by men of knowledge is exploited and prostituted to the base use of victimising the innocent and the honest. Such was the state of affairs when the imperious Ravana was holding sway over the three worlds. Just as to-day the immense resources of power that science has placed at the disposal of man is misused for the destruction of whole nations, Ravana too secured immense power—physical and spiritual—by penances and daring sacrifices, and used it ultimately to terrorise the universe and to gratify his lust. As his very name signifies, he made the

worlds cry with pain. Haughty<sup>1</sup> with his strength, he tormented the world. He was wicked, cruel, devoid of any compassion; he was a menace to the whole universe<sup>1</sup>. So vicious was his pursuit of Artha (material prosperity, power, position and the like). In an equally vicious manner did he go about satisfying his enormous sexual lust (Kama). He filled his harem with women whom he carried away from various parts of his empire. Woe to the state the head and the first citizen of which sets such a fashion. When the Devas reported to God Vishnu and sought His help to end this reign of terror, they mentioned not only that he devastated the three worlds, but what was worse, he carried away women by force (*Utsaadayati lokaams trin striyas caapy apakarshati*: I. 16:6.). And again Valmiki says of Ravana when the anti-hero is first introduced to us that he was the uprooter of Dharma and the abductor of others' wives (*U'cchetbaaram ca dharmaanaam paradaaraabhimarsanam* III 32:12).

<sup>1</sup> वीर्योत्सेकेन बाधते । I. 15, 22.

(लोकाः) क्रूरेण क्लिप्त हिंसिताः । I. 15, 23.

उत्सादयति लोकांस्त्रीन् ॥ I. 16, 6.

कर्कशं निरनुक्रोशं प्रजानामहिते रतम् ।

रावणं सर्वभूतानां सर्वलोकभयावहम् ॥

III. 32, 21.

This is the greater Adharma of Ravana. Jatayus points out to him that a king, of all persons, should not commit this sin (*vide* R. III ; 50: 6-10). Vibhishana tells him that the seeking of others' women is injurious to one's good name, one's longevity and health, and one's material prosperity, and that it is the most terrible of sins.<sup>2</sup> On seeing Ravana seated on his throne, a majestic and effulgent personality, shining amidst all pomp, Hanuman is struck with his grandeur and might. But Hanuman adds, "Of what avail is this external greatness where there is not that moral purity which alone makes real greatness? This Adharma runs as a virus and brings to naught all other excellences. He would then have been a protector (*Rakshitaa*) and not the destroyer he was."<sup>3</sup> And Fate goaded him on to lay hands on Sita who proved his death. None realised this tragedy more than the devoted wife of Ravana, Mandodari, who made this solemn pronouncement on Ravana's dead body: "Subduing your senses you became victorious over the three worlds. Smarting for vengeance, they have now brought you down."<sup>4</sup> It is the *Indriyas*, the senses, that

killed Ravana. He rose and fell, all by himself.

The hero, whom Valmiki places before us in contrast to this Ravana, is introduced to the reader at the very beginning as one who had controlled himself, a self-possessed man.<sup>5</sup> Who else will be able to kill Ravana, put down the vices for which that demonic character stood, resuscitate Dharma and place before us the ideal of enjoying *Artha* and *Kama* within the bounds of *Dharma* and without endangering *Dharma*? In the description of Rama's qualities in the opening canto of the *Ayodhyakanda*, Valmiki says of Rama that he enjoyed mundane life in harmony with righteousness (*Artha - dharmau ca samgrihya sukhatantra* II. 1:2). He was proficient in all the recreational arts (*Vaihaarikaanaam silpaanaam vijnata* II. 1:28), and foremost in music (*Gaandharve ca bhuvi sresthak* II. 2:34). Rama did enjoy but consistent with *Dharma* on the one hand and *Artha* on the other. Either considerations of material misfortune or considerations of violence to righteousness should check one's lust; otherwise *Kama* would consume man, instead of ministering to his enjoyment of it. Rama condemned vigorously those who failed to make *Dharma* the sole motive and keynote of their lives; he tells Lakshmana that a Mammon-worshipper should be detested (*Dveshyo bhavaty arthaparo hi loka* II. 21:58). According to him equally contemptible is he who plans his life on the basis of *Kama* (*kaama-atmataa khalv api na prasataa* II. 21:58). When Kaikeyi shows her anxiety that Rama should not tarry

<sup>2</sup> अयशस्यमनायुष्यं परदाराभिर्गर्शनम् ।

अर्थक्षयकरं घोरं पापस्य च पुनर्भवम् ॥

R. VI. 9, 15.

<sup>3</sup> अहो रूपं अहो धैर्यं अहो सत्त्वं अहो द्युतिः ।

अहो राक्षसराजस्य सर्वलक्षणयुक्ता ॥

यद्यधर्मो न बलवान् स्यादयं राक्षसेश्वरः ।

स्यादयं सुरलोकस्य सशक्रस्यापि रक्षिता ॥

V. 49, 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> इन्द्रियाणि पुरा जित्वा जितं त्रिभुवनं त्वया ।

स्मरद्भिरिव तदैव इन्द्रियैरेव निर्जितः ॥

VI. 114, 17.

<sup>5</sup> इह्वाकुं वंशप्रभवो रामो नाम जनैः श्रुतः ।

नियतात्मा

I. 1, 8.

but leave for the forest as quickly as possible, Rama asks her not to worry about the question whether he would go away to the forests or not. He would certainly go; for he is not the man who was thirsting for the pleasures of regal life. He tells her : "Queen, I am not a materially-minded person (*Vaaham arthapāro devi* II. 19:20). Take me as being equal in spirit to the sages, upholding always nothing but Dharma (*Viddhi maam rishibhis tulyam kevalam dharmam aasthitam* II : 19, 20)." The character of the ruling power had deteriorated into one of pure aggrandisement. Rama realised this state of affairs and condemned the kings who were prompted by ignoble motives of gain, as *Arthajyestha*—those for whom wealth alone was supreme. In contrast to them, Rama was one to whom Dharma was supreme, all in all ; he was a *Dharmajyestha* as his father says of him : "He, my eldest son is one for whom Dharma is supreme." (*Sa me jyēshtas sūtaḥ śrīman dharmajyēshta iti iva me* II. 12:16). Dharma, like charity, began with himself, and at his home, for Rama. He guarded his own Dharma and thus induced an attitude of righteousness in his nearest and this expanding wave of righteousness purified the world around him.<sup>6</sup>

In this, Rama, illustrated how best Dharma could be protected. It cannot be protected by merely going about preaching it to others. From self to the world was the path of reform suggested by Rama. In the

coronation-crisis, Rama's mother used all her force, combining her tears with argument to stop Rama from going to the forest. Lakshmana forcefully pleaded that they should take law into their own hands, bind over Dasaratha, Kaikeyi and others, and assume power. As if Rama had not the requisite valour for it, effervescent Lakshmana offered his martial assistance. Unruffled at all this tempest, Rama coolly advised his younger brother that Dharma was greater, that for Truth's sake he would give up anything, and that, when one observed Dharma, he got Artha and Kama also.<sup>7</sup>

If Ravana was haughty with valour, (*Viryotsekana baadhate*) Rama, who had more valour, was not puffed up with it (*Viryavaan na ca viryena mahataa svena vismitah* II. 1:13). And he knew to what use he should put his valour. He must use it for up-holding Dharma and Satya (truth), and for the succour of the good who are in distress. Bhavabhuti makes Kusadhvaja say that Rama looks like prowess and valour taken shape, with Dharma as their chief (*Prataapa-vikramau dharmam puraskrityo dgatav iva*—"Mahavira Charita Nataka" I. 22). Rama tells Lakshmana (in the epic) : "Lakshmana, I bear arms for Truth. This entire universe, it is not difficult for me to make my own ; but I desire not even the suzerainty of the heavens, if it is to be through unrighte-

<sup>6</sup> धर्मार्थक्रामाः किल तात लोके समीक्षिता

धर्मफलोदयेषु ।

<sup>7</sup> रक्षिता स्वस्य धर्मस्य स्वजनस्य च रक्षिता ।

रक्षिता जीवन्तोऽनस्य धर्मस्य च परन्तपः ॥

I. 1, 13-14.

ते तत्र सर्वे स्युरसंशयं मे भार्येव वक्ष्यामि ता सुपुत्रा ॥ II. 21, 57.

ousness."<sup>8</sup> Again Dasaratha tells Kaikayi that Rama wins the world by truth (*Satyena lokaan jayati*, R. II. 12:8).

In the Chitrakuta mountain, Bharata waited on Rama at the head of a deputation and pleaded that Rama should return and ascend the throne of Ayodhya. Rama would not, however, go back on his word, and hence refused to return. Jabali, a Brahmin courtier, however tried to shake Rama's faith in Dharma and Satya by arguing the point of view of the worldly men of the most unscrupulous type. Rama at once flared up at this insult. He said, he knew that kings and States there were which were based purely on material and mundane considerations, and which achieved their purposes through the machinery of falsehood and cheating; he would have nothing to do with those theories and practices of polity and statecraft; it was not Dharma, but Adharma stalking about as Dharma; only wicked, mean, avaricious and criminal rulers resorted to it, not he who would not transgress truth either out of avarice or delusion. Rama tells Jabali: "The entire universe revolves on Desire; subjects take to the ways that have been adopted by their sovereigns. Only such kingship is lasting as is truthful and non-villainous; hence, the soul of the state is Truth; on Truth is the universe based. .... Not out of covetousness, not out of delusion, not out of ignorance shall I break the bounds of Truth .... I

abjure that Kshatriya morality, which, wearing the garb of righteousness, is in fact unrighteousness resorted to by low, wicked, greedy, sinful creatures."<sup>9</sup> Rama's State was based on Truth and non-wickedness. Thus Dharma and Satya were the two basic principles of the life of Rama. If now one says 'Dharmatma' and 'Satyasandha', he would be referring to one only—Rama. It is because Rama was the very embodiment of righteousness and truth that Lakshmana could say: "If Dasaratha's son, Rama, is righteous and truthful, and if in prowess he has no rival, then, O arrow, slay this son of Ravana."<sup>10</sup> And Indrajit was killed. It is not the arrow that killed him. It was the power of Rama's Righteousness and Truth.

So much about how Rama ennobled a life rendered sordid by excessive and evil pursuit of Artha, by his example of Dharma. In a similar manner, Rama ennobled life which an unbridled pursuit of Kama had rendered putrid. Right from the beginning, sexual morality forms a dominant theme of the Ramayana.

<sup>8</sup> कामवृत्तस्त्वयं लोकः कृत्स्नः समुपवर्तते ।  
यद्वृत्ताः सन्ति राजानः तद्वृत्तास्सन्ति हि प्रजाः ॥  
सत्यमेवानृशंसं च राजवृत्तं सनातनम् ।  
तस्मात्सत्यात्मकं राज्यं सत्येलोकः प्रतिष्ठितः ॥  
नैव लोभाच्च मोहाद्वा न ह्यज्ञानात्तमोऽन्वितः ।  
सेतुं सत्यस्य मेत्स्यामि ——— ॥  
ज्ञानं धर्ममहं त्यक्ष्ये ह्यधर्मं धर्मसंहितम् ।  
क्षुद्रैर्देवैर्गणैर्लुब्धैश्च सेवितं पापकर्मभिः ॥

I. 109, 9-20.

<sup>9</sup> सत्येन आयुधमालभे ।

नेयं मम मही सौम्य दुर्लभा सागराम्बरा ।

न हीच्छेयमधर्मेण शक्रत्वमपि लक्ष्मण ॥

II. 97, 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि ।

पौरुषे चाप्रतिद्वन्द्वः शरैर्न जहि रावणिम् ॥

VI. 91, 69.



Three great capitals are involved in the story, Ayodhya, Kishkindha and Lanka. In Ayodhya was ruling King Dasaratha who had many wives and who was a slave to the youngest of them. In Kishkindha, the tragedy centred round an elder brother depriving his younger of his wife and appropriating her to himself. In Lanka, again, was ruling a demon king notorious for abducting women. Amidst all this promiscuous and unseemly emotional life, Rama stood up for neatness, and lifted the banner of a pure monogamous life. On the one hand Valmiki says of Ravana that he carried away and ravished others' women. On the other, he says of Rama, through the mouth of Kaikeyi : Rama never even looked at others' women (*Ramas tu pardaaran vai cakshurbhyaam api nekshate* II. 72:48). Sita tells Rama that the three great sins are speaking falsehood, touching others' women and being habitually bent towards injuring others without even any enmity to them ; and in regard to all these, Rama was clean. "This evil begot of Desire is threefold. One prominent evil is falsehood, and both the others are of weightier significance. They are association with others' wives and being harmful without any cause of hostility. Falsehood, O Raghava, hath never been thine, nor can it ever be thine in future. Nor yet, O foremost of men, canst thou ever even in fancy be (guilty of) going after others' wives, which sin destroys all religious merit. These, O Rama, are by no means in thee. Thou art always attracted by thy wife alone, and by

no other woman."<sup>11</sup> Again Sita herself says to Anasuya in the forest : "How could one like me not bear the great love I have towards a person like Rama ? He is a man of controlled senses and permanent affection, and absolutely righteous—one who reveres other women as mother" (R. II. 118: 3-6). Who is more fitted to certify this than Sita ? Summing up Rama's character, Jatayus says in the *Adhyatma Ramayana*, that Rama is accessible to those who have refrained from touching others' wealth and others' wives<sup>12</sup>. Summing up the story of the *Ramayana* in its own inimitable manner, the *Bhagavata* says that Rama taught the world how to live the life of a pure householder by remaining devoted to a single wife, sage-like in character, and absolutely taintless.<sup>13</sup>

११ त्रीण्येव व्यसनान्यत्र कामजानि भवन्त्युत ।

मिथ्यावाक्यं परमक्रं तस्माद्भुक्तरावुभौ ।

परदाराभिगमनं विना वैरं च रौद्रता ॥

मिथ्यावाक्यं न ते भूतं न भविष्यति राघव ।

कुतोऽभिलषणं स्त्रीणां परेषां धर्मेनाशनम् ॥

तव नास्ति मनुष्येन्द्र न चाभूते कदाचन ।

मनस्यपि तथा राम न चैतद्विद्यते क्वचित् ॥

III. 9, 3-6.

१२ स्वदारनिरतस्त्वं च नित्यमेन नृपात्मज ॥

परधनपरदारवर्जितानां

परयुग्मभूतिषु तुष्टमानसानाम् ।

परहितनिरतात्मनां सुसेव्यं

रघुवरमनुजलोचनं प्रपद्ये ॥ III. 8, 50.

१३ एकपत्नीव्रतधरः राजर्षिचरितः शुचिः ।

स्वधर्मे गृहमेधीयं शिक्षयन्स्वयमाचारम् ॥

IX. 10, 55.

(To be continued)

# EVOLUTION AND ITS PURPOSE ACCORDING TO VEDANTA

*By Atmananda*

[In the following paragraphs is given a description of the evolution of the universe according to Vedantic Theology. In these days, when scientific cosmology has become popular, it may be of interest to know what the ancient sages of India thought of the evolution of the universe, following the purely psychological method of enquiry.]

**W**E live in a world which is an infinitesimal part of the huge Cosmos. What is its basis? How has it come into existence? Who rules it? How is it constituted, what is going to be its end? What are the Jeevas? What is their goal?—these are serious questions. Every religion has answered them in terms of its own philosophy. As followers of the Sanatana Dharma it is proper that we should know how our philosophy has answered them.

Advaita Vedanta asserts that the universe has no real existence and that its apparent existence is illusory like the mirage seen in a desert at midday or like the serpent mistakenly apprehended at dusk in place of a real rope. But the mirage, though unreal, appears real for the time being, and misleads the thirsty deer, and the illusory serpent frightens the ignorant man. These illusory objects too are said to have a Vyavaharika Satta or practical existence. The Jeevas in the universe are also similarly misled by their ignorance of the real nature of the universe. The illusion about reality is due to Adhyasa or the wrong attribution of the nature of one thing to another. This apprehension of the illusive universe in place of its real basis is what we know as creation, and we, as embodied souls, form part of it.

## BRAHMAN

Prior to creation of the universe there existed Brahman only and the universe came out of It. Brahman will remain even after the universe is re-absorbed into It; It is eternal and infinite and is the basis of the universe. The universe has only a transitory existence in It. The Upanishads unanimously confirm this fact. The word Brahman is derived from the Sanskrit root *Brih*=to expand, and means that which is expansive, all-pervading. Brahman is the Supreme Being regarded as Impersonal and divested of all qualities and action. It is also called Chaitanya, being the Supreme Spirit considered as the essence of all being and the source of all sensation. It is indescribable by the tongue, unthinkable by the mind, and uncognisable by the senses (Kena Upa. I. 3-8). It is incomparable with anything in this world. The Vedas describe It as *Neti, Neti* (Not this, Not this) in relation to the objects of the universe. Its positive attributes are Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Therefore it is called Sat - Chit - Ananda - Brahman. These three attributes are opposed to those of the perishable universe, viz., non-existence, ignorance and pain (Asat, Jada and Duhkha).

## MAYA

The word Maya literally means jugglery or an illusion of magic, in other words it means a thing which is non-existent but which appears real. In Vedanta philosophy it means unreality, the illusion by virtue of which one considers the unreal universe as really existent and distinct from the Supreme Spirit. That the Supreme Spirit can be the cause of this illusion of the universe is unimaginable, as It is absorbed in Its Sat-Chit-Ananda State, and as stated above, is actionless. The creation of this illusion is therefore attributed to Its latent creative power called Shakti, Maya, or Prakriti, which is inseparable from It, like the light from the sun. When the time for creation comes the Supreme Spirit becomes aware that It is Brahman (*Aham-Brahmasmi*) and that It is alone (*Ekameva-dwitiyam*) and wills that It should be many (*Bahusyam Prajayeya*). *Vide* Taite-reya Upa (II-6) and Aitereya Upa. (I-3). The very thought (*Vritti*) of the Supreme Spirit, that It is Brahman and alone, is considered to be the manifestation of its latent Maya. This being Her first manifestation in course of evolution, She is called Adishakti, Adinaya, or Mula Prakriti, because at subsequent stages She manifests Herself in various other aspects as will be seen later on. With Brahman's will of becoming many She, with Her Gunas (or qualities) Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, is stirred into action. Not being distinct from Brahman, She considers Herself lonely and becomes restive, and the work of creation begins forthwith. When She becomes active She tries to envelope Brahman but succeeds only partially in Her at-

tempt ; for even after pervading the entire Cosmos, Brahman remains outside it in its original state, (*vide* Purusha-sukta). On being stirred into action Mulaprakriti reveals Herself in Her twofold aspect, *viz.*, 'Life' and 'Form'. Life, also called Paraprakriti, consists of Shuddhasattva and supplies an Upadhi (adjunct) to Brahman to manifest itself as Ishwara (Logos). Form, otherwise called, Apra-prakriti or Avidya, is eightfold, *i.e.*, manifests itself as earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and egoism. It consists of Malina-Sattva (*i.e.*, Sattva mixed with Rajas and Tamas), and supplies another adjunct to Brahman to manifest itself as Jeeva. And these two aspects of Prakriti are said to form the womb of all beings (Gita VII, 4-6). As Life, Mulaprakriti, like Brahman, pervades all the planes of the Universe (B. Gita VII, 5), which are Bhuh or earth (including in it the lower regions called Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Rasatala, Mahatala and Patala); Bhuvah (astral world); and Svah (Heaven), consisting of Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satyam. As Form She (Mulaprakriti) envelopes Her own former aspect in the lower three regions (Bhuh, Bhuvah and Swah).

Next Para-prakriti reveals Herself as Maha-Saraswati, Maha-Lakshmi, and Maha-Kali or Parvati.

The way in which Apra-prakriti multiplies Herself is as follows : Out of Brahman comes ether or Akasa, from Akasha, Vayu (air); from Vayu, Agni (fire); from Agni, Apa (water); from Apa, Prithivi (earth); from Prithivi, Oushadhi (vegetable kingdom); from Oushadhi, Annam (food); from Annam, Purusha (phy-

sical body of the Jeeva), (*vide Taillirya II, 1*).

Thus it will be seen that Aparakriti manifests Herself as the material universe, and that Brahman is the basis of all creation from beginning to end. Brahman is considered both the efficient and the material cause of the universe. But from the relative point of view of the world, it is also usual to regard the Divine will as its efficient cause, and the Aparakriti as its material cause. It is owing to Her that the Jeeva is under illusion of regarding Brahman, *i.e.*, his own Self (Atman), as different from It, and identifies himself with the limiting adjuncts, and continues to be bound down to the world of transmigration. He cannot escape from Her influence unless and until he surrenders himself to the Lord (*Gita VII, 15*). Para-prakriti or *Gayatri*, which consists solely of Shuddha-sattva, however, is said to be the Saviour of mankind. This implies practice of Saguna Upasana (worship of God as endowed with attributes) prior to adopting Nirguna Upasana (the worship of the attributeless).

#### ISHWARA

Brahman, which is normally Nirguna (attributeless), becomes Saguna (with attributes) when Mulaparakriti is stirred into action. Saguna Brahman is also called Anantakoti-Brahmand-Nayaka, Parameshwara or Sarveshwara. These names indicate that there are innumerable universes including our own, which together go to form the Cosmos with Saguna Brahman as its supreme Lord; for Brahman is said to pervade the entire Cosmos when it is created (*Aitareya*

*III, 12*). The illustration of a central globe, with innumerable globes fitted on it all round, might give an idea of what the Cosmos is. In relation to the Universe, Saguna Brahman is called Ishwara or the Logos. To be more clear Brahman with Maya or Vidya as its adjunct is called Ishwara. He is the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Ruler of the Universe and Lord of the Prakriti, and is also called Paramatma, being the supreme soul of the universe. He has three states of consciousness (*Vaishwanara*, *Sutratma* and *Antaryami*), and three bodies (*Virata*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Avyakrita*), corresponding to the three Gunas of the Prakriti, or the three Matras (*A, U, M*) of Om-kara (*Pranava*). The sun, the moon, the stars, the electricity or the fire cannot illumine Him, but because of Him they are illumined (*Mundak Up. II, 11, 10*; and *B. G. XV, 12*). A section of a globe consisting of seven concentric rings, with vacant spaces between them, might help the conception of the relative positions of Ishwara, Para-prakriti (subtle Nature), and Aparakriti (gross Nature). In this sketch the centre would represent the all-pervading Ishwara; Para-prakriti would be represented by the entire area of the seven rings; and Aparakriti would be shown as enveloping Her in the outer three rings (*Bhuh, Bhuvah and Swahah*), thus leaving Para-prakriti pure in the inner four rings (*Mahah to Satyam*).

For purposes of evolution, Ishwara manifests Himself as the Trimurtis (Trinity)—*Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva* corresponding respectively to the *Rajas, Sattva and Tamas* elements of the Prakriti, and assigns to them the respective duties of creation,

destruction and preservation (preparatory to re-creation) of the Universe (Taittiriya II, 6). The Trimurtis are in effect Saguna Brahman, and each one has His Shakti popularly called his spouse. The so-called spouses of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are manifestations of the Para-prakriti and are named Saraswati, Laxmi and Parvati respectively. The region of pure Vidya is said to be inhabited by highly evolved souls who have attained freedom from bondage but have retained their individuality. While completing their own spiritual growth there, they are said to be voluntarily ready to be reborn on earth at the will of the Lord to do their bit in the work of evolution. It is said that the Lord, normally a passive witness of the work of the Prakriti, which is being carried out according to His laws, begins to take an active part in the spiritual welfare of the Sadhaka when he has reached a certain stage of spiritual development, and to send him help by way of inspiration and helpful thoughts through the agency of these evolved souls in furtherance of his spiritual growth.

#### JEEVA

The image of Ishwara in Buddhi is called Jeeva. To be more clear, Brahman with Avidya as Its Upadi is called Jeeva. Avidya (Apara-prakriti) consists of innumerable cells which provide bodies for the Jeevas. They are of five categories, corresponding to the five elements, viz., the Devatas (minor gods), Jarayujah (beings consisting of humanity and the quadrupeds, born from the womb), Andajah (beings born from eggs, such as birds, reptiles, fish, etc.), Swedajah (insects born of sweat,

such as lice, bugs, etc.), and Udbhidjah (plant life coming up by germination and sprouting). Jeevas are also grouped into three classes corresponding to the three Gunas of the Prakriti, viz., Devatas in whom the spirit and Sattva Guna predominates, humanity in whom Rajo-guna prevails and spirit and matter are more or less in an even combination, and animals including all that has life in it, with Tamo-guna and matter predominant in them. Unlike Ishwara, Jeeva is powerless, ignorant, limited and subservient to Avidya.

Of the three planes of Avidya, Bhuh is the home of humanity and lower kingdoms of life including minerals; Bhuvah is the place where souls of departed living beings are sojourners waiting to be reborn on the earth or to be admitted into heaven according to their past actions; and Swah is the place of Devatas, where their devotees and those who worship the Supreme Being with desires find a temporary home until they are reborn on the earth on the exhaustion of their merit (Gita II, 26). Like Ishwara, Jeeva (his prototype) has three states of consciousness, namely, Jagrat or waking (Vishwa), Swapna or dream (Tejasa), and Sushupti or sleep (Prajna); and three bodies—gross, subtle and causal. These three bodies are also subdivided into five, corresponding to the five elements, viz., Annamaya-kosha (gross body), and the Pranamaya (the vital), the Manomaya (the mental), and the Vijnanamaya (the intellectual) Koshas or sheaths which together make up the subtle body. In addition to these there is the fifth sheath known as Anandamaya Kosha or causal body.

ISHWARA AND JEEVA ARE  
BRAHMAN

Thus it will be seen that Brahman is the basis of the Cosmos, and Prakriti is Its active agent in creation. Ishwara and Jeeva are Its manifestations in Its two shades of Prakriti of opposite nature. The illustration of the sun and its reflection in the mirror directly, and, through the latter, on the wall, may give some idea of the relation between Brahman, Ishwara, Jeeva and Prakriti. The sun may be taken to represent Brahman ; its image in the mirror is Ishwara, and the appearance of that reflected image on the wall is Jeeva. The mirror and the wall are the two opposite aspects of Prakriti. A reflection has no independent existence, and therefore it is not separate from its source. When the vehicles in which it appears are removed, it merges back into its source. It must be admitted that the illustration of the sun and his reflections with their adjuncts is not indetical with that of Brahman and Its reflections in all respects ; for the former appear separate from one another whereas Brahman is all-pervading and contains in Itself Ishwara, Jeeva and the two aspects of Prakriti. According to Advaita Vedanta, Ishwara and Jeeva represent the 'Tat' (That) and the 'Twam' (Thou) of the great saying 'Tat-twam-asi' (Thou art that), and both these devoid of their adjuncts are the same as the all-pervading Brahman Itself which is represented by 'asi' in the great saying. The presence of Brahman in the human body in its double capacity as Kutastha (Ishwara) and Jeeva is compared to two birds seated on a single tree, one as a passive wit-

ness and the other as the active enjoyer of fruit of his actions (Mund. U. P.III, 11) respectively.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

The foregoing paragraphs will give a fairly good idea of the constitution of the Universe, viz., that Brahman is its basis ; that it is the result of the activity of Maya ; that Ishwara is its ruler ; that the Jeevas, spread over the lower three planes, in order to reap the fruit of their past Karma, are the ruled. But it is not possible for Jeeva to experience the fruit of its Karma with Avidya (Karana-sharira) alone as its adjunct. The gross and the subtle bodies are necessary for the same. To facilitate their formation the five subtle elements (Apanchikrita Pan-chamahabhutani), viz., Akasha, Vayu, Tejas, Jala and Prithvi emerged from the Tamas aspect of the Lord's Prakriti. These form the material cause of the Universe while the Lord's will, which brings about their evolution, is the efficient cause. From out of the Sattwic portion of the five elements, individually, came the subtle senses of knowledge (Jnanendriyani), viz., hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell respectively ; and from the combination of the Sattwa elements came the five-fold inner organ consisting of mind, intellect, mind-stuff and egoism. From the Rajasik portions of the five elements, individually, came the five organs of action (Karmendriyani), namely, speech, hand, leg, and organs of excretion and generation ; and from a combination of them came the five life-breaths, viz., Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana. The twenty-four principles mentioned above form the Sukehma Sharira (subtle body).

From the combination of the quintupled five elements (Panchikrita-panchli-mahabhutani) was formed the physical body of Jeeva. This is the process of evolution. The Jeeva seated in Buddhi (intellect), with the help of the gross and the subtle body, experiences the fruit of its past Karma, and does further Karma in the current life which, when done in the service of the Lord, helps Jeeva to attain salvation, but when done with some earthly objects in view, causes further bondage.

During involution the reverse process takes place, and the universe merges back into Brahman, and Brahman alone remains then in Its original state. The universe is full of apparently inexplicable inequalities, but Scriptures say that they are the consequence of the unequal Karma of the Jeevas. Karma as well as the universe are said to be beginningless. Attempts at tracing their origin is said to have baffled the greatest of philosophers of the past. Creation has been described by Bhagawan Vedavyas as the Leela or play of Paramatman, and aspirants for spiritual advancement are therefore warned against attempting the impossible task of tracing its origin. Vedanta requires the aspirant to go ahead for realisation, and not to look back.

Thus it will be seen that evolution means Brahman's manifesting Itself as the entire universe, Ishwara and Jeevas included. It is something like a dream in which our self manifests itself as the seer, seeing and things seen. In fact Advaita Vedanta looks upon the universe as a feat of jugglery, as Sri Shankaracharya has described it, displayed by the will of

the all-pervading Lord, in Himself by means of His Maya. Spiritually advanced souls are however not deceived by this illusion, and it is their happy privilege to be able to save others from it.

### THE GOAL OF HUMANITY

It is said that the purpose of human birth is realisation of Brahman, in this very life (Kena II. 5), apparently owing to uncertainty of getting another opportunity. The Jeeva can achieve this goal by Nirguna Upasana (contemplation on the attributeless Absolute), which consists of constantly meditating that he himself is Brahman, and by dissociating himself from his bodies and from everything else which is perishable, both earthly and heavenly. But before he becomes competent for this, he must have previously purified his mind by Saguna Upasana or worship of personal God, which includes faithful discharge of duties according to the rules of Varnashrama Dharma as service of God, and cultivating the four great qualities, *viz.*, discrimination, dispassion, and control of the mind and of the senses. Life in this world, with all its evils and good things, is said to enable the Jeeva to learn to control matter, *i.e.*, mind, body and speech, and to befit himself for the realisation of the goal. Consistently with this, the Sadhaka is required to discharge duties he owes to all grades of life which are manifestations of Brahman. Such realisation is altogether outside the province of the animal and other lower kingdoms of life as they are all Tamasik by nature, and spiritually farthest from divinity. They have to wait for their chance till they are born as human beings in the course of evolution. It is the

happy privilege of human kingdom which is pre-eminently Rajasik by nature to be able to achieve the goal. The struggle which the Jeeva has to face for achieving it is very stiff. In this dreadful fight against the forces of Maya, victory is ensured to him provided he seeks the help of One more powerful than Maya, *viz.*, God, the Lord of Maya. This implies worship of Paramatman.

For such a culmination to be possible the Sadhaka has need of a Guru. Unlike a teacher called Adhyapaka,

who for some earthly consideration imparts to his pupil knowledge which enables him to achieve something perishable, a spiritual Guru is one who has no desire for anything, is well-read, and has realised Brahman; who can impart to his disciple divine knowledge regarding Brahman, Maya, Ishwara, Jeeva, the universe and the relation between them; and who can initiate him into methods of worship and contemplation, the practice of which will enable him to realise his unity with Brahman.

## THE TEACHINGS OF SRI MADHVA

*By P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.*

[Mr. P. Nagaraja Rao is a research scholar in the Philosophy Department of the Madras University. The philosophy of Sri Madhva, of which Mr. Nagaraja Rao gives a brief explanation in this essay, is an important branch of Vedantic thought that has not yet been presented adequately to the English knowing public. Both as a philosophy and as a religion, an unprejudiced seeker after truth will find this system as stimulating and inspiring as any other.]

**T**HE great system of Vedanta inaugurated by the hoary sage Badarayana is based on the three authoritative Hindu Scriptures, the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Vedanta Sutras, all of which taken together are called Prasthanatrya. The first great school of Vedanta was the Advaita of Sri Sankara. Sankara refuted the dualistic interpretations of the Upanishads put forth by the Sankhyas. Further he refuted the Mimamsaka's contention that Karma or ritualistic action, and Vedic injunction are the central themes of the Upanishads and that the Self (Atman) referred to in the Upanishads is the agent required in performance of sacrificial act. Sankara refuted the inter-relations between the ritualistic portion and philosophic portion of the Vedas. The most distinguishing feature of Advaita is the conception of the Nirguna Brahman (the Attributeless Di-

vine) as the ultimate goal and the only reality. The belief in the indeterminable nature of the world of facts is the essence of Advaita logic. Advaita dialecticians have examined with surpassing subtlety the definitions of the different categories of thought enunciated by the different systems of Indian philosophy. They have declared that the categories of thought and the relational way of knowing things are ridden with contradictions. Thus they have pointed out the necessity for the assumption of the sole Reality uncharacterised by any attribute. The world of facts is neither real like Brahman nor unreal like the horns of a hare; because it is sublatale on the one hand, and is perceived on the other. Further Sankara holds that the Jiva and Brahman are identical in essence. It is on account of the fundamental



nescience that we have the perception of difference.

On the ethical side, according to the Advaitic tradition, complete renunciation, *i.e.*, *Karmasannyasa* is advocated as the path of Moksha. But the attainment of Moksha is not possible without the removal of nescience (*Avidya*). The ground for perception of plurality and the torments of *Samsara* is this *Avidya* or *Adhyasa*. Mere abstinence from Karma or adherence to the scripture-ordained rituals will not help us to realise the Self. The removal of *Avidya* is the *sine qua non* for Moksha. This is effected through *Advaitajnana* (Knowledge of unity).

Sankara is keen to refute *Brahma-parinamavada* or the doctrine of real transformation of Brahman, and to establish *Vivartavada* (or the doctrine of illusory or apparent change). He is not so hostile to the Sankhya doctrine, *Prakriti-parinamavada*, (transformation of *Prakriti* or root-matter) as he is to be *Brahma-parinamavada*. With great difficulty Sankara has tried to prove that the Brahman of Advaita is not the same as the *Sunya* (void) of the Buddhists of the *Madhyamika* school. The resemblance between them is superficial. He labours hard to prove his point. The Advaitins deny the *Nama-rupa* (name and form) of an object, and not that which underlies the *Nama* and the *Rupa*. The Buddhists not only negate the distinction (*Bheda*) but also the distincts (*Bhidyamana*). This in short is an imperfect but not very inaccurate account of Advaita.

Sri Madhva's Dvaita Vedanta is an open and a powerful reaction against the absolutistic monism of Sankara. Madhva's Vedanta is a pluralistic, realistic and theistic system. He posits the ultimate reality

of all perceived things. For a thing to be real, it need to have only existed sometime at least. He believes in the reality of the manifold independent reals. These different independent reals are radically different from one another. According to Madhva difference is the very characteristic feature of things. It is the *Svarupa* of the object. Difference is fundamental as well as foundational to Dvaita epistemology. Though difference is the very nature of the things, it can still be distinguished. This process of distinction between really two non-differents is effected by the assumption of the category *Visesha*. *Viseshas* are many in number. They are self-differentiating. They in their turn need no other *Visesa* to differentiate them from others. True to the principle of parsimony of categories Madhva's assumption of the category of *Visesha* has saved him from the powerful attack of the Advaitins. From the days of Mandana the Advaitins have attacked the category of difference with phenomenal acuteness, and have tried to catch the Dvaitin on the horns of a dilemma. Briefly the argument is as follows :—

1. Is difference the nature of a thing or is it its attribute? "If difference were of the very nature of things, there would be no things to be different; for, whatever you may say is one thing, will immediately break up because difference is of its nature." This line of argument will not leave even the primal atom as unit, and in the absence of units there can be no difference. As against this powerful attack, the Dvaitins posit that difference (*Visesa*) is the nature of thing itself, and that distinctions could be effected with the help of *Visesha*. In the words of Jayatirtha, *Visesha* is

"Bheda prathinidhi." The grand dilectics of Advaita, which is so fatal to difference, is of no avail against the assumption of the category of Visesa.

After dismissing the general case for difference, the Advaitins attack the difference between Isvara and Jiva. They ask us how we cognise the difference? Perception cannot guarantee you the knowledge of this difference between Isvara and Jiva. Difference is a relational type of knowledge. We cannot cognise a relation without the cognition of the relata. One of the relata in the cognition of the difference between Jiva and Isvara is Isvara. Isvara cannot be perceived. So you cannot have the knowledge of the relation of difference.

As against this, Dvaitins urge that the cognition of the difference between Jiva and Isvara is perceived by Isvara. Scriptures guarantee this truth. As for the cognition of the Jiva, perception of the relata is not absolutely necessary for the cognition of the difference *e.g.*, this pillar is not a pot. There is no pot here. This proves that we can have the cognition of difference, and that perception grants it.

The Advaitins contend that scriptures explain and elaborate those passages that purport to teach difference and then refute them by the Aikyabodhaka Mahavakyas or the scriptural sentences that teach unity. As against this Dvaitins put a straight question. Explanation and expatiation are meaningful only when we have to teach a truth, and not when falsehood is the theme. Anuvada of an untruth is not the purpose of Vedantic texts.

The supreme reality according to Madhava is Lord Vishnu. He is the

abode of all infinite number of auspicious attributes (Anantakalyanaguna paripurana). The entire scripture, and no particular Mahavakya, is the description of Lord Vishnu. Every word, every articulate sound, has primary significance only with reference to Vishnu. They primarily connote Him only and have reference to the objects of the world in a secondary sense. The supremacy of Lord Vishnu is the prime import of all the Vedas. That is the Mahatatparya of all the Srutis. Second in importance is Lakshmi. She is also classed as a dependant. She is not, however, tainted by material qualities. Third in importance is Vayu, the mediator, without whose grace Aparoksha is impossible. The role of Vayu in Dvaita Vedanta can favourably be compared with the role of Jesus, the Son of God, in Christianity, and the role of Lakshmi in Visishtadvaita. Tradition and scripture with a sustained and cogent array of quotations maintain that Sri Madhva is the third incarnation of Vayu. An explicit statement of this fact is found in the Baliktha Sukta of Rig Veda.

All the other souls in this world are classified under three divisions by Madhava. 1. Sattvic souls; 2. Rajasic souls; and 3. Tamasic souls. The Fundamentum divisionis is the intrinsic Svarupa (nature) of the soul. This intrinsic Svarupa of the soul is not made known until the state of realisation is reached. Moksha is the realisation of our own Svarupa. This Svarupa is like a closed iron safe to us. We do not know what it has in it. Whether it has Tamasic (demoniac) property or Sattvic (divine) property is only known when the safe is open. The material in the

safe is our own property. What we need is only the key of the safe. The worship of Vishnu and His grace yield us the key, and to our surprise our own Svarupa is disclosed to us. Moksha is no miracle. It is the perception of the true nature of our self. In Moksha we realise what we are. If things and selves essentially differ in their intrinsic nature, Vishnu or Madhva cannot be charged with partiality for their inability to change their selves. Once we understand the doctrine of Jivatraividhya or distinction between three kinds of souls in this scientific sense, we find nothing irrational or reactionary in this conception. Unsympathetic critics have roughly handled this doctrine. Freedom and law actually co-exist in this world. To think that God cannot combine them, is to doubt His omnipotence.

Further Madhva maintains that Moksha, with bliss as its characteristic, is bestowed on the elect by Isvara purely out of his own choice. Many are called but few are chosen. To qualify ourselves for the membership in the Kingdom of Vaikunta we should follow the scripture-ordained path of Karma and thus cleanse our soul. Then we must pray to the Lord constantly without any interruption in the attitude a servant has towards his master.

A scheme of five-fold difference is maintained by Madhva. They are as follows:—

1. The difference between Isvara and Jiva (soul) ; 2. between Jiva and Jiva; 3. between Jiva and Jada (matter) ; 4. between Jada and Jada and 5. between Jada and Isvara. To summarise briefly, Dvaita Vedanta strives to make out five distinct points

as against Advaita. 1. The auspicious qualifications of Isvara form a direct challenge to the concept of Nirguna Brahman (the Attributeless Divine). 2. The ultimate reality of the world of objects in contrast to the relative reality predicted by the Advaitins. 3. The affirmation of the difference between Isvara and Jiva as against the identity maintained by the Advaitins. 4. The identification of Advaita with Buddhism. 5. The claim is that Advaita is not a true representation of the three scriptures of Vedanta which go under the name of Prasthanatrya.

A robust independence, sound logic, cogent array of quotations, refreshing originality of treatment and an unflinching loyalty to the Sruti and the spirit of the scriptures, are a few of the remarkable features of Dvaita Vedanta.

The ordinary individual realises the perplexities of life. The difficulties and danger and the sense of internal conflict become acute. Desire to act right is at war with insurgent and unknown appetites and passions. A great sense of need arises which may last for long and produce acute dejection. Then there is a profound sense of sin. It is at this stage that faith in theism and a good God helps us. Discords are harmonised, the period of storm and stress ends, for God is in Heaven and all is right with the world. The prodigal son returns home and God in his fatherly love says, This my son was dead, but has become alive again. In short Dvaita Vedanta is a religion of spiritual redemption and not a social reform. It is a type of revolutionary idealism that estranges the revolutionary by its idealism, and the conservative by a drastic revaluation of his earthly goods.

# THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

## (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By *Swami Thyagisananda*

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Gnani* as well as a *Bhakta*. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRA 4.

The fourth *Sutra* gives a further description of the nature of *Bhakti* from the point of view of the effect it produces on the devotees.

यद्धृत्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति अमृतो भवति तृप्तो भवति ॥४॥

यत् = Which लब्ध्वा = gaining पुमान् = man सिद्धः = one who has reached the goal of all spiritual *Sadhanas* भवति = becomes अमृतः = divine भवति = becomes तृप्तः = contented भवति = becomes.

Gaining<sup>1</sup> that<sup>2</sup>, man<sup>3</sup> realises his perfection<sup>4</sup> and divinity<sup>5</sup> and becomes thoroughly contented<sup>6</sup>.

Notes—The *Sutra* refers directly to the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti* described in the previous one as freedom (*Mukti*) itself. It purports to say that this freedom, which forms the essential nature of *Bhakti*, is something which the devotee does not directly aspire after, but an attainment that is added unto him by the God of Love quite unsolicited; that this freedom conferred by *Bhakti* is the birth-right of every man, irrespective of caste, colour or creed; and that it makes one, on whom it is bestowed, perfect, divine and contented.

1. *Gaining*.—The word 'labdhva' or 'gaining' is used in reference to

*Bhakti* as *Amritam* or freedom (*Mukti*) in order to indicate that the devotee does not strive consciously for *Mukti*, but *Mukti* is conferred on him, unsolicited, by the Lord of Love. As far as the devotee is concerned, his interest lies in loving God and in serving Him and His children. He simply immerses himself in that Love, and has no room left in his mind to think of anything else than his Lord. For who can refuse to be absorbed in that ocean of beauty and bliss if he has but the opportunity of knowing Him! When Yudhishtira was once asked why he was so much enamoured of his Lord, he could only retort by asking the question why he should love the Himalayas! Nevertheless God who loves his devotees more than He loves Himself, and who feels pride in considering Himself the servant of His devotees and is always anxious to do some good turn to them, takes care to bless them with *Mukti* also. Sri Ramakrishna used to compare God to a loving master, who, feeling happy in honouring a devoted servant, makes him sit on the same seat with himself, in spite of the protests of his humble servant. When *Mukti*, which is a state of oneness with the Supreme Being, thus comes to the devotee in spite of his desire to escape from the sacrilege of raising himself to the position of his Lord, he simply bows down to the Lord's will as inevitable,

for fear of wounding the feelings of his Lord, and like an obedient servant accepts His gift as a token of His love, but even then without any consideration of any selfish satisfaction. Heaven or hell, liberation or bondage, is all the same to him, and they have the same value only as gifts from his beloved. Cf. Sri Sankara's prayer in *Shivanandalahari*, "Let me be born as a man or god, an animal or a tree, a gnat or a worm or a bird. If my heart is immersed in the love of Thy blessed lotus feet, what do I care for body of any kind?" Vide also *Mukundamala*, "I have no desire for religious merit or for wealth, or for sensual pleasures. Let anything happen to me according to my previous *Karma*. But this is my prayer that I may have unswerving love for the blessed feet of my Lord." In *Bhagavata* XI, 14, 14 the Lord Himself says, "Those who have surrendered their souls to Me, do not care for anything except Myself, not even the status of Brahma, or Indra, or an Emperor, or the lordship of the nether world, or psychic powers, nay, not even freedom from rebirth." Again, "Those heroes and *sadhvas*, who are devoted to me as their sole goal and refuge, do not care even for *Kaivalya* or freedom from birth which I may give them."

2. *That*.—Refers to *Amritam* or freedom (*Mukti*) described in the previous *Sutra* as the intrinsic nature of *Bhakti*.

3. *Man*.—The significance of the word 'Puman' or 'man' used in the *Sutra* is that the practice of the discipline of *Bhakti* and the attainment of the state of *Mukti* it confers are not restricted by any considerations

of caste, colour or sex. Every human being, provided he or she desires earnestly, can practise *Bhakti* and attain *Mukti* or freedom through it. The possession of sub-human bodies like those of animals and birds is perhaps the only condition that makes the culture of *Bhakti* impossible. It is not however meant that these sub-human creations have no souls, but that they have not reached yet a state of evolution in body and mind which fulfils the minimum requirements of a life of devotion. It must, however, be noted that in several devotional books, especially the Puranas, we come across instances of birds and animals having gained *Bhakti* and *Mukti*, and that Madhusudana Saraswati, the great devotee and philosopher, maintains in his *Bhakti Rasayana* that all living beings are entitled to *Bhakti*. In this scientific age, we can understand it only as an exaggeration to impress on men how devotion to God can achieve even the seemingly impossible. This is the only conclusion we can arrive at on the subject, seeing that the *Brahma Sutra* I, III, 25 maintains that man alone is entitled to spiritual practices and realisation.

The question of the qualification of superhuman beings like *Asuras* and *Devas* may also arise here. Most probably Narada does not take them into consideration in this *Sutra*. It has to be noted that according to *Brahma Sutra* they are entitled for spiritual realisation.

The use of the word 'man' also signifies definitely that Narada holds no consideration of sex or caste as a bar to the practice of devotion and attainment of *Mukti* at the perfec-

tion of devotional life. Since this is the unanimous view of all teachers of the *Bhakti* school, and since the number of the devotees of the highest type, coming from women and the castes considered lowest, are so many, we need not cite illustrations here to substantiate the point. But a word must be said regarding Sankara's view on this question, as there is a current mistaken view that he regards the highest destiny of man, namely, *Mukti* or liberation, to be the privilege of the highest caste alone. What Sankara has actually done is only to support, by way of concession to the prejudices of his age, the ineligibility of *non-Dvija* castes (i.e., castes that are not invested with sacred thread) to study the *Vedas* and follow the disciplines and observances which require a knowledge of the *Vedic* text. But for *Jnana* or highest Knowledge, which according to him is identical with *Mukti*, no one is disqualified by any question of caste, creed or sex. He admits the possibility of Vidura and other *Sutras* having attained realisation. In commenting on III. 4, 38 of the *Brahma Sutras*, he maintains that spiritual realisation is possible for all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed, through *Japa*, fasting, worship of God, etc. And in concluding the discussion on the *Apasudradhikarana* of the *Brahma Sutras* he quotes with approval the *Puranic* view that the *Puranas* should be taught to all. Now the *Puranas* contain elaborate expositions of all the mystic wisdom of the *Vedas*, and one of the three source books of *Vedanta* philosophy, namely, the *Bhagavad Gita*, occurs in the *Mahabharata*, a book classed as *Itihasa*, and therefore open to all. This concession therefore only means that

Sankara was willing to give the substance of *Vedic* wisdom to all while only denying the shadow out of consideration for the prejudices of the age. Nowhere does he deny *Mukti* or the chances of gaining it, to any one. Hence he and Narada are in complete agreement on this point of the eligibility of all to *Mukti*.

4. *Perfection*.—A *Siddha* or a perfect man is one who has attained the goal of all *Sadhanas*. The goal of all human aspirations is perfection. Till that is attained *Sadhana* has to be continued in spite of the minor attainments and psychic powers that one may come to be endowed with. Perfection is already inherent in man. It is only clouded due to *Maya*. When *Maya* is transcended through spiritual *Sadhanas* such as the various *Yogas*, the natural perfections of the Atman manifest themselves as the sun shining when the clouds clear away. The function of *Sadhana* is only to remove this cloud of *Maya*. Patanjali, the teacher of *Yoga*, himself admits that devotion to God is one of the methods of attaining this perfection and one of the easiest and the most direct of them all. See his *Sutra*, I. 23.

5. *Divinity*.—The popular conception of a *Siddha* is of one possessing various super-human powers, and it is to prevent any such misconception that Narada uses immediately after, the word '*Amrita*' translated here as 'divinity.' In other words the sign of a 'perfect man' or '*Siddha*' is not the possession of miraculous powers, but the attainment of unity with the Supreme Being. Perfection being possible only in God, the man of highest realisation is said to become one with God; for, as we have seen,

the individuality of man merges in the Supreme Divinity when the highest realisation is gained.

6. *Contented*.—The contentment of the perfect man is to be distinguished from the self-satisfaction of lesser men. For at the stage of *Sadhana*, such self-satisfaction is an obstacle. Without the help of a divine discontent with the imperfect and the ephemeral, one is not likely to progress to the highest. It is only when one reaches the highest perfection that one can safely be contented with oneself.

One must also be careful to remember that this contentment here referred to is not the kind of satisfaction that rises when some desire is fulfilled, but it is an absolute satisfaction arising from the absence of all possibility of any desire at all. Nor does it mean that he will lapse into inactivity, for though he has achieved the highest, he is bound to be active in promoting the spiritual welfare of others less fortunate than himself, in a spirit of service.

Again mere satisfaction should not be taken to be the test of realisation, for, then, whenever we are satisfied with some minor achievement, we may not aspire further. This satisfaction referred to in the *Sutra* is only an accompaniment of realisation, and not one that should be consciously aspired after by the *sadhaka*. For such hankering for satisfaction being itself a kind of desire, it will be an obstacle in the way of its achievement. As St. John of the Cross would say, 'To seek satisfaction in God is spiritual gluttony.' The aspirant must be ready to accept God even if His coming means trouble and tribulation. Cf. Madame Guyon's *Acquiescence of Pure Love*, where she says :

To me it is equal whether love ordain  
My life or death, appoint me pain or  
ease.

My soul perceives no real ill in pain ;  
In ease or health no real good she sees ;  
One good she covets, and that good  
alone,—

To choose Thy will, from selfish bias  
free,

And to prefer a cottage to a throne,  
And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee.

Fenelon also says: "If God were to will to send the souls of the just to hell—so Crysostom and Clement suggest—souls in the third state would not love Him the less." Again he says, "It is only pure love that loves to suffer." Cf., also Job's saying: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." We have also Kunti Devi's prayer in *Bhagavatam* where she beseeches Lord Sri Krishna to visit her always with miseries and sufferings, so that she may be able to remember Him always. Sri Sankara also says in the *Sivandalahari* that he will be quite satisfied if all his sufferings are pleasant to the Lord. Such should be the attitude of the real *Bhakta* before he can aspire to the highest. Truth should always be welcome even if it be unpleasant, and until this hankering for mere naked truth, free from all considerations of satisfactoriness or otherwise, has been cultivated, it is not possible to realise the highest Truth, viz., God. But when Truth is actually realised, i.e., when the highest *Bhakti*, which is of the nature of *Mukti*, is attained, it brings into the mind of man, as an invariable concomitant, an unperturbed sense of satisfaction which the *Bhagavat Gita* has in view when it describes perfection in *Yoga* as 'that having obtained which man considers no other gain as superior.'

## SAYINGS OF SAINT RAMAVALLABHA DAS

"A rope is real, its snake-like appearance is unreal. Sun's heat is real, its concomitant mirage is unreal. Pearl is real, not so the drop of water on a lotus-leaf. Ocean is real, its waves are unsteady. Ramavallabha (i.e., Krishna or God) is real. Show of piety is deceptive."

"Piety—Bhakti—is the root. Non-attachment is the flower. Knowledge is its fruit. Eat that and seek bliss."

"Continents are nine. The Earth is one. Paths of Bhakti are nine, but Bhakti is one. Gems are nine but the brilliance is one. Fruits may be many but their sweetness is one. Faiths are many but God is one."

"Being God-mad alone we can sing this glory. Nara—man—can become *Narayan*. Without that aim no endeavours are worth making. For that reason Ramavallabha Das sings his own hymns."

"I surrender myself to Thee. Do with me whatever Thou choosest. I have no other desire or prayer. Save me or destroy me. Thou hast created small particles as well as huge mountain-ranges. Who can probe into Thy mysteries? As Thou pervadest the whole universe, what is it that I shall ask of Thee, or not ask of Thee? I am at Thy disposal. Mine is not the way to ask for this or that."

—Translated from Marathi by G. A. Chandavarkar.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Extra-sensory Perception :** By J. B. Rhine. Published by Messrs. Faber and Faber, Ltd., 24 Russell Square, London. Pp. 243. Price 12sh. 6d.

The book under review is the report of a series of ingenious experiments conducted by Prof. Rhine for a period of three years in that field of psychical research generally known as clairvoyance and telepathy. In a branch of study like this, where amateurs and faddists generally abound, the credentials of the persons conducting the experiments are as important as the methods employed. Prof. Rhine has had the advantage of an academic training in natural sciences as well as in psychology and philosophy, and his co-workers too are all university men. The experiments were conducted under the auspices of the Duke University, and, as the report amply testifies, under strict laboratory conditions. And regarding the experimenter and his methods

we have the following assurance from no less an authority in the field of psychology than Prof. William MacDonald in his Foreword to the book: "I found J. B. Rhine to be a ruthless seeker after truth, almost, I may say, a fanatical devotee of science, a radical believer in the adequacy of its methods and in their unlimited possibilities..... Finally, I would testify that I have 'sat in' at the experimentation on a number of occasions, and have in some instances personally conducted the experiments, and have failed to discover either any indication of lack of good faith or any serious flaw in the procedures followed."

The experiments conducted were chiefly by means of 'card-guessing', and their objects were, first, to answer by mathematically indisputable evidence the question of the occurrence of extra-sensory perception and of its range, and, second, to further



its understanding by the discovery of its relationships to other mental processes and to the essential physiological and physical conditions. And the main result of the experiments has been to show the actual existence of the power of extra-sensory perception on the basis of 90,000 trials. The book gives a somewhat detailed description of the experiments, and then proceeds to consider the various possible explanations of the phenomenon. Dr. Rhine considers, one after another, all the main hypotheses put forward by thinkers who deny the existence of extra-sensory perception, namely, (1) chance hypothesis, (2) fraud hypothesis, (3) hypothesis of incompetence, (4) unconscious sensory perception and (5) hypothesis of rational inference. By a discussion of the nature of his experiments and their results, Dr. Rhine conclusively proves the existence of a faculty which he calls extra-sensory perception, *i.e.*, the power of knowing facts outside without the aid of the sensory processes and inferential methods, which alone constitute our ordinary way of knowing things.

His refutation of the radiation theory, advanced in explanation of the phenomena by some scientists who accept the fact of extra-sensory perception, is of special interest. We have as yet no evidence to show that human nervous system emanates 'thought waves' or that it selectively absorbs some outside radiation. Again in cases where mere card and ink are enough to stimulate extra-sensory perception, electro-physiology cannot help us at all. Moreover radiant energy declines in intensity with the square of the distance from the source and if radiation were the principle involved, then distance would bring a sharp decline in pure telepathy scoring. But the result was found to be just opposite, and especially the case of the increase of correct hits from 7.7 in 25, to 10 in 25, when experiments were carried out at a distance of 250 miles, disproves the very plausibility of any radiation theory. Other important difficulties in this explanation are those of orientation and focussing, of localising a card and keeping the right pack in mind, and above all, of the ability of the percipient to distinguish the figures on cards, all of which lie flat on a table. Dr. Rhine therefore concludes that radiant energy is inadequate as an explanation, and that, in

order to save the coherence, unity and comprehensibility of our basic physics, another kind of energy will have to be posited. Further he says : "It seems quite possible that the long untouched mystery of the physics of conscious process may yet be first peeped into from the odd corners of these more bizarre mental phenomena."

Dr. Rhine is not, however, in favour of invoking the idea of disembodied spirits to explain these phenomena. The hypothesis he favours is the relatively independent agency of the mind under certain conditions of the material world. This hypothesis carries with it such implications as that the percipient's mind 'goes out' to this object, that space, the basic feature of the material universe, has no meaning in extra-sensory perception, and that 'inverse square' laws which all matter-bound energies obey, as well as limitations of material nerves, sense organs and external obstructions like stone walls, have no significance in this way of knowing.

The general features of this way of knowing, may thus be stated in the words of Dr. Rhine himself : "First, no one—not even a psychologist—can reasonably doubt that E.S.P. (extra-sensory perception), is a mental process ; and that there seems to be good ground for regarding it as a natural part of the endowment of mind. It is a more delicate mental process than most, suffering easily from dissociation or distraction, and returning again with reintegration of effort and improved attention. It is inhibited too by conflict, as in self-doubt, doubt as to the possibility or wisdom of a procedure, or in conflict of desires. It requires with most subjects rather good abstraction and close attention to the task in hand. It is less resistant to dissociation than sensory perception or even than simple reasoning. On the points so far mentioned, it is more like creative intellectual artistic synthesis ; yet is not so fatiguing as these ; and, unlike these, can be speeded up rapidly (faster than I can record) ; and it is not learnt or developed, as far as we know yet, as are these ; it is unanalysable introspectively, as are these mostly. But it substitutes for other forms of cognition, for visual or auditory perception, rational judgment or recall. It inter-operates with them, combines in any way and works from a wide range of moti-

vation, for money or for kindness, for play or display, for science or for courtesy. It is like the sensory functions rather than rational cognition in its lack of development (if this is actually a fact, as it seems). But it is not like them in localisation, feeling of real contact experienced, need of orientation to function, resistance to distraction and dissociation. It is simple cognition, so far as subjective analysis goes as yet ; but it uses memory, visual or other imagination—in fact all of mind that is needed—in its functioning. It is normal, not related to mental weakness or disease .... There is no suggestion of incorporeal agencies in connection with experiments . . This then is the tentative psychological sketch we have so far achieved."

No reader can but be impressed by the thorough-going scientific spirit running through the whole work, and students of psychical science will feel glad that such a scientific mind as Dr. Rhine's has taken to this study. We may expect him in future to extend his method of research to the study of other para-psychological phenomena as well, and shed light on aspects and powers of human mind that are at present considered either fictitious, abnormal or bizarre.

**Lectures on the Bhagavad Gita :** (*With an English translation of the Gita*). By Principal D. S. Sarma, M. A. Published by N. Subba Rau Pantulu, President of the Hindu Samaj, Rajahmundry. Pp. 213.

Prof. D. S. Sarma and his writings on the Gita require no introduction to Gita-lovers in this country ; for his translation of this great scripture has by now received recognition in all quarters as the most essential book for any one who wants to study the Gita through the English language. His translation holds its unrivalled position in modern Gita literature because it combines in itself both the qualities of a good translation—faithfulness to the original and correctness in the use of the language into which the translation is made. What is more, Principal Sarma has succeeded not only in translating the language of the Gita but its thought as well.

The book under review contains the full translation without the Sanskrit text, besides six lectures which occupy 96 pages of the book. While we would value the book mainly for the translation, its usefulness has no doubt been increased by the inclusion of these lectures which are very lucid and full of useful information regarding the contents of the Gita and the relation of this scripture to the life of modern man. The subjects treated are : (1) How to read the Gita ; (2) The content and form of the Gita ; (3) The Gita and Spiritual Life ; (4) The Gita and Contemporary Thought ; (5) The Gita and Swadharma ; and (6) The Gita and Progress. A perusal of these lectures will be of immense help in gaining an intelligent grasp of the philosophy and ideal of life for which the Gita stands.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### India at the Paris Exhibition

We in India hear very little of the great international exhibition that is going on in Paris. Perhaps this is because the exhibition is in a country outside the Empire. It may be interesting to our readers to get some scrappy information at least about it, from the following extract from a letter sent by an Indian friend who is at present in Paris :

"It will take months to get a fraction of the benefit at least, as the whole "Exposition" gives almost a bird's eye view of the cultural progress of the world, particularly the West. Here we get a cultural world

in miniature. The British pavilion was a great disappointment to all of us. Whereas many pavillions have good cultural value, here we felt we were moving before the shop windows of Wren Bennet or Whiteaway Laidlaw. Nothing more. Canada has an excellent pavilion. When I enquired at the gate why India is not in any section, the person concerned replied grudgingly, "It is the fault of India." Netherlands has given an excellent section to Dutch Indies. With what strides Egypt is progressing, her pavilion amply demonstrates.

But my severe disappointment in not seeing India in "England" was to an ex-

tent made up, when I unexpectedly met Gandhiji in "U.S.A." Mahatmaji's bust in sculpture is placed in a prominent place. He faces Rockefeller—the man in loin cloth with his characteristic smile, smiling at the multi-millionaire. A study in contrast, I thought. And again, as I moved round, much of my disappointment left me as I met Sir C. V. Raman in the science pavilion. I consider the science pavilion to be the greatest achievement of the Exposition. Here in two places Raman is to be seen. An experiment is explained showing the Raman Effect. Gandhiji, the summation of Indian cultural achievements at the present, and Raman, to us the hope of the future as regards the positive sciences,—these two personalities have their own world recognition. We in our jealous moods of internecine unholy warfare, do not know that India is known outside through these cultural messengers. I did not find any other trace of India anywhere else.

The best arranged pavilion is Germany's. Here as well as in another pavilion we get demonstrations of television. Another machine that attracted my attention was the automatic guide at the gates. Press an alphabet in the key board, immediately a lighted line will show the road you want. Pull a key, you hear immediately a gramophone record detailing to you all you have to observe and see.

The Seine river flows right through the middle of the exhibition grounds with Eiffel Tower in the centre. The illuminations remind us of Kannambadi. But here Mysore Krishnarajasagara defeats Paris. In spite of all multi-coloured effects produced by the playing and singing fountains here, I am of the opinion that Krishnarajasagara has better artistic appeal. But here these artistic exuberance has welled out from the

heart of the nation—the common mass-man. Each of the French provinces and colonies has separate pavilions, and in each house the special feature of that province, from folklore to dance, is exhibited, giving also the particular costumes people wear."

#### The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Rangoon

During the year 1936 the total number of patients treated at the Sevashram was 89,506. These patients did not belong exclusively to the city of Rangoon; a considerable number of them came from the suburbs and from some remote districts of Burma.

The number of patients admitted in the Indoor Department during the year under review was 2,952 males, 957 females, and 174 children. The aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 33,391 males, 7,163 females, 1,298 children, i.e., a total of 41,852. The average daily attendance was 91 males, 20 females, 3 children, i.e., a total of 114. The average period of stay in the hospital in each case was 12 days. Some chronic cases had to be kept for months.

At the Out-patient Department the total number of attendance came up to 2,23,252 including men, women and children. The average daily attendance was 418 men, 110 women and 84 children, i.e., a total of 612.

During the year under report a new ward for eye diseases was opened, the opening function being done by His Excellency Sir Archibald Cochrane, the Governor of Burma.

The total income of the Sevashram during the year was Rs. 70,039-15-9, and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 60,211-8-6.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

मासपक्षोपवासेन मन्यन्ते यत् तपो जनाः । आत्मतन्त्रोपघातस्तु न तपस् तत् सतां मतम् ॥  
त्यागश्च सन्नतिश्चैव शिष्यते तप उत्तमम् । सदोपवासी स भवेत् ब्रह्मचारी सदा भवेत् ॥  
मुनिश्च स्यात् सदा विप्रो दैवतं च सदा भवेत् । कुटुम्बिको धर्मपरः सदाऽस्वप्रश्न भारत ॥  
अन्तरा प्रातराशं च सायमाशं तथैव च । सदोपवासी स भवेत् यो न भुङ्क्तेऽन्तरा पुनः ॥  
भार्या गच्छन् ब्रह्मचारी ऋतौ भवति ब्राह्मणः । ऋतवादी भवेन्नित्यं ज्ञाननित्यश्च यो नरः ॥  
न भक्षयेद् वृथा मांसममांसाशी भवत्यपि । दाननित्यः पवित्री स्याद् अस्वप्रश्न दिवाऽस्वपन् ॥  
श्रुत्यातिथिषु यो भुङ्क्ते भुक्तवत्सु सदा नरः । अमृतं केवलं भुङ्क्ते इति विद्धि युधिष्ठिर ॥

Common folk consider penance in terms of abstinence from food for months or fortnights or days ; but in the eyes of good people, that is no penance which impedes the acquirement of the knowledge of Atman. The highest penance consists of ceasing from activities harmful to others, and of serving fellow beings with humility. He who performs such penance is considered to be always fasting and observing *Brahmacharya*. Such an intelligent man is an ascetic, nay a god ; he is supremely virtuous, though he be a householder. He who does not eat anything in the interval between his morning and evening meals, is as good as one who fasts. Again, a householder whose sex life is strictly regulated may be looked upon as observing *Brahmacharya*. He who is unintermittently engaged in the pursuit of knowledge is a truth-speaker. Even one who abstains from meat obtained by needless slaughter is deemed free from meat eating. He who is ever ready to give his possessions in charity is holy, and one who does not fall asleep at day-time is a vigilant man. O Yudhisthira, know him to be verily partaking of ambrosia, who dines after feeding his servants and guests.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva. Chapter 226, Verses 4-6 and 10-13.

## WHAT CAN INDIA CONTRIBUTE TO UNIVERSAL RELIGION ?

[In the following paragraphs we have discussed in brief some of the spiritual ideals of India that are likely to receive universal acceptance.]

### I

**L**IFE in the modern world does not allow any country or culture to remain in isolation. Consequently, in all human institutions and ideals we find in modern times a tendency to share many common features, partly due to the mutual influence they are exerting on one another, and partly due to the sameness of the environment in which they all alike have to thrive. When modern methods of communication have brought the different parts of the world very close to one another, and when the political, economic and intellectual life of nations is interlinked in a very vital sense, there is no wonder if the world culture shows a tendency to be more and more cosmopolitan; for isolation was the main reason for the divergent developments in the cultures of different parts of the world, and when conditions have made this isolation impossible, people all the world over are bound to develop common features in their cultural life.

In this general fusion of ideals and institutions, religion also is bound to be involved, and many of the religious symbols—philosophical, mythological and ritualistic—of the different peoples of the earth, will become the common heritage of mankind according to their refinement and capacity to appeal to the highest in man. Just as in the material and intellec-

tual spheres of world-culture the influence of the nations of the West is bound to be dominant because of the great contributions they have made in these spheres, India in its turn is destined to contribute a greater share to the spiritual development of mankind, because here, more than anywhere else, have men dived deep into the world of the spirit and developed religious concepts and symbols the appeal of which will be felt more and more by men in proportion to their freedom from passions and prejudices. In the following paragraphs we shall in brief describe some of those features of Indian religious thought which are bound to become the common religious heritage of mankind.

### II

Among the great contributions India has to make, the most important perhaps is in connection with the conception of the Deity. In all systems of religious thought except Vedanta and philosophies strongly influenced by it, the general tendency is to limit their speculations about the Deity to the standpoint of the world and the human being. In thinking about the origin of the universe, man feels the need of an all-powerful and omniscient being as its cause, and in speculating about his own ultimate destiny in the cosmic scheme, he arrives at the conception of a Saviour God who is the repository of all the

most sublime virtues that his mind could conceive of. The human mind recognises an identity of being in regard to the entities he arrives at in response to these deepest questions of his intellectual and emotional life. He is the God of all the religions, and it is He who is worshipped by people all the world over under different names and with varying emphasis on some set of attributes or other. This is the Personal God of religion. He is sometimes conceived as endowed with glorious forms and sometimes without it. In either case the conception is personal, in so far as it is arrived at in response to human needs and is consequently clothed in the garb of anthropomorphism.

But is this conception of the Deity complete? However sublime it might be in its highest levels, and however satisfactory it might be in regard to our personal needs, the problem would occur to the human mind as to what He is in Himself without any reference to the universe and our individual destiny. In other words man feels that a God who is the creator and saviour is so closely bound up with the universe and our individuality that in order to be sure of His absolute existence it is necessary to get an assurance of His being from a point of view having no reference to the universe or our individuality.

The philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute records the experience of the spiritual consciousness in this respect. The Personal God is the view of the Deity that man gets as long as He is a man. From our human point of view, the most important factors of our experience are the universe and our individuality. Hence the humanised Deity or the anthropomorphic

God is the Lord of the universe, and is endowed with an infinite degree of those highest attributes which we human beings prize in ourselves. But the experience of the Impersonal comes when individuality or Jivahood, the pivot of our anthropomorphic outlook, is transcended, and the individual consciousness itself becomes absolute and impersonal.

The experience of the Impersonal is not a denial of Personal God, nor the perception of a Deity separate from and higher than Him. For the Personal and the Impersonal constitute one and the same being. If any distinction can be made between them at all, it is only that they are two aspects of the same Deity, the Personal God being the revelation of Him we get in our human consciousness, and the Impersonal being the revelation of the same Deity coming on consciousness when it has itself become impersonalised. Nor does the Impersonal negate all the highest values associated with Personal God. What it implies is that owing to the transformation of the perceiving consciousness, these attributes and values are no longer experienced in their personal and cosmic reference.

In place of denying Personal God and all that He implies, the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute is the greatest assurance of their validity. For it asserts the self-existence of God quite apart from the universe, and it assures us of the identity of the Deity amidst all the variations of His anthropomorphic vestures.

### III

Another great idea that Indian religious thought can contribute to the world's spiritual heritage is in regard

to the conception of the soul. In all the other great religions of the world except those of India, it is doubtful whether this important conception has at all received the serious attention of speculative thought. In the Indian doctrine of the Atman, one comes across a profound doctrine that establishes a close connection between the Truth in man and the Truth of the universe.

In every religion, from the lowest to the highest, the doctrine of the soul is primarily intended to convey the idea that the principle of consciousness in man, though experienced ordinarily in association with the body, is in itself separate, and does survive the death of the body. Now the Hindu doctrine of the Atman makes a very great advance on this idea by connecting it with the guiding principle at the back of the universe. Why is the soul of man immortal? To this straight question the Hindu thought would give the plain answer: Because it is in essence one with the Divine. In fact this idea has gone so deeply into the mind of the Hindu that often the two terms Brahman and Atman are confusedly applied to one and the same entity. Though this identification, when it springs from confusion of thought, is not to be encouraged, one would none the less discover, even in this fumbling, the profound significance of the Hindu doctrine of Atman, if it is clearly borne in mind that in no other religion we find people confounding the significance of the two corresponding words, God and soul. For Brahman in fact means the universal spirit that expresses itself as the world, and Atman means the spirit embodied in man. Now because the Hindu mind

is somehow saturated with the idea of the essential kinship of the spirit in man with the spirit guiding the universe, it sometimes forgets even the original difference in the significance of these terms.

We feel the evolutionary urge at two ends. We feel it operating within ourselves, and we find it also in the world outside, shaping the destinies of men and things. We ascribe the former to soul and the latter to God, and one of the problems for theologians everywhere has been to propound their conception of the relation existing between these two. In almost all countries outside India a very simple solution has been given to this question by saying that the soul is a creature of God, by which it is meant that God brought the soul into existence at the birth of the body. The Vedantic thinkers do not, however, favour such an absolute difference in entity and nature between the spirit in man and the spirit behind the universe. They would tell man at the early stages of his spiritual life that the Atman, the conscious essence in him, is a part of God, as a spark of fire is of the great universal fire, and that spiritual life means the recognition of this essential kinship of man with God and the consequent participation in the Divine life. At the higher levels of spiritual life the Vedanta would go a step further and hold that even the distinctness of the soul's entity from that of the Supreme Being is not an ultimate fact. In the highest spiritual communion the Atman bursts its shell of individuality, and recognises that he is not only part of the Deity but His very being. It is ignorance that has been making him forgetful of his real nature. When

the clouds of ignorance are thickest, man confounds his soul-life with the life of the body, but as ignorance is gradually dispelled, he recognises his kinship with the Divine more and more, until in the final enlightenment, he become aware of the non-difference of his very being from Him.

#### IV

Another great contribution of India to the world's spiritual thought is a direct consequence of this doctrine of the Atman. This is the Indian conception of Yoga or the cultivation of spiritual life in a systematic way. It is a remarkable fact that in almost all non-Indian religions the chief form of worship consists in prayer which is essentially a form of petitioning to a far-off God. This sense of the externality of the object of worship is also implicit in the common habit of the worshippers looking up in their devotions, as if they were addressing a being in the sky. In contrast to this is the Indian conception of worship, in which petitioning forms so unimportant a part. In fact according to Hindu conceptions, petitioning, except when it is for spiritual enlightenment does not form part of true worship at all. Worship as a whole takes the form of communion and not prayer, and there is no Hindu mode of worship, even when the adoration of images forms a part of it, which is without the important item of meditation, in which the worshipper dives into the inner depth of the soul. If the upward look is the characteristic feature of many a non-Hindu devotee in his prayers, the closed eye in an effort to look within is the distinguishing feature of the Hindu at his devotions.

This conception of communion with the inner Self, which forms the essential principle of Yoga, is the direct outcome of the doctrine of the Atman. When the Upanishadic thinker declared "Thou art That" as the essence of all wisdom, he gave a definite bent to the Indian spiritual genius. The 'That' behind the universe cannot be understood by looking without or by analysing the constitution of the external world. In the Atman, the 'Thou' within, is to be found the clue to it. The soul of man is of the very nature of the soul of the universe. Unless the cosmos has hidden within it this spiritual essence, how could it evolve at the human level this unique centre of consciousness—a personality with the faculty of conscience and the appreciation of values. According to the spiritual traditions of India, the way to highest wisdom lies through a study of this inner self of man, wherein the introspective mind discovers the real nature of the Deity and His relation with the universe. This is the principle underlying the Indian Yoga.

The culture of Yoga in this country has been along two main lines. There is on the one hand the Bhakti Yoga or the path of Love, which is an attempt to gain the highest through the purification and concentration of emotions, and there is on the other Gnana Yoga or the path of Knowledge, the followers of which seek to perfect themselves by the purification and concentration of the intellect. Devotion to personal God and the cultivation of a feeling of intimacy with Him form the essence of the first, while the practice of discrimination and self-analysis are the important features of the other. To



train the mind to concentrate on its own inner working is a discipline involved in both the paths, although it is sometimes spoken of as an independent path under the name of Raja Yoga owing to the scientific precision to which its methods have been reduced in this country.

In the Hindu system of Yoga the attempt to commune with the Supreme Being is not confined to the period spent in meditation and introspection. For the implication of Yoga can be extended from introspection to active life also. If the Supreme Spirit is involved in one individual self, He is also present in the self of others and in society as a whole. By keeping this in view and serving one's fellow beings in the spirit that one is serving the Divinity lodged within them, one can develop one's inner life just as one does by meditation. For if the training of the mind to see the Divinity within is the principle involved in meditation, then that principle is involved also in work discharged in the spirit of worshipful service. Not only philanthropic activities, but all the duties that man has to discharge towards family, society, country and the world at large can be performed in this spirit, and the whole of one's active life too may be converted into the practice of Yoga. This is the fundamental principle of Karma Yoga or path of Work, which too, like Raja Yoga, is sometimes spoken of as a path in itself, but which in fact is, as the Gita has shown, only an application of the path of Love to the needs of active temperaments.

It would be seen from the above brief exposition that the doctrine of the Atma, and the idea of Divine immanence which naturally follows

from it, have far-reaching consequences in the field of philosophy, mysticism and social life, and form the only possible foundation for an ideal of efficient civic life without doing violence to man's mystical aspirations.

## V

Another important spiritual ideal in the conception of which Hindu thought can make substantial contribution, is that of the immortality of the soul. The Vedantic thought is perhaps the most rational presentation of this doctrine. In the first place no doctrine of the immortality of the soul can be consistent without the admission of its eternality. If there is something in man that remains for ever, that something must have been for all time in the past also. But we find ourselves full of imperfections and limitations in our present state of existence, and our whole life is a struggle to overcome the same. Hence we can conceive of our past also only as an imperfect state although it is without any origination in time. The history of the beginningless past of the individual is a series of embodiments, in which he is struggling to manifest the perfection that is characteristic of the Atman, but which is hidden by the clouds of ignorance. These series of births, with their varying turns of fortune, their succession of enjoyments and sufferings, are regulated by the good and evil actions of the individual himself. In all these successive embodiments the general tendency is towards progress which consists in the gradual manifestation of the divinity of the soul, although there may be temporary set backs confined to limited periods. This is the doctrine of the law of Karma and re-

incarnation, which not only forms the clue to the understanding of the ethical significance of our life, but is also an essential metaphysical postulate if we are to have a consistent view regarding the immortality of the soul.

But the soul or Atman in its essential nature is perfect, and, as we have said before, is in essence one with the Supreme Divinity. Man's craving for immortality is a quest for the discovery of this fact which is withheld from him by ignorance consisting in

the sense of identification with limited material vestures. When knowledge illumines the individual caught in the travails of this quest, he discovers that the urge in him for immortality springs from his kinship with the Immortal Essence behind this whole cosmic manifestation. When this kinship is recognised, the identification with the perishable material vestures disappears, and the individual joins his immortal source. Thus by losing his particularity, the individual realises his Immortality.

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## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*By A Devotee*

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushaji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for quickening the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of Sannyasin and householder devotees of his, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by the Swami to spiritual aspirants.]

IT was morning. One by one the inmates of the Math were gathering in the room of Mahapurushaji Maharaj as usual. The Swami was seated on his usual seat, with his mind dwelling on the Lord, and his face beaming in an ecstatic mood. Practically none in the room was talking. Among those present was a monk who had arrived a few days back from one of the Branch Centres of the Math. Representing his mental condition to Sri Mahapurushaji, he said, "Maharaj, I am going through my spiritual practices to the best of my capacity. But why is it that I am not finding any joy within? I am going through everything in the fashion of a routine work, as it were. This cannot give any satisfaction. Nor do I have any peace of mind."

Mahapurushaji said very calmly: Well, my boy, attainment of peace is not such an easy affair. This path is very difficult. It is a thorny path. "Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path (of Self-realization), difficult to cross and hard to tread, so say the wise."—These are sayings of the Rishis who visualised the Truth. It is indeed a very strenuous path. It may seem easy from outside, but soon one finds one has to make way through great difficulties. It is, however, true that the aspirant receives His Grace, if he yearns for Him with a sincere heart. You have surely read in Sri Ramakrishna's life how even he had to go through strenuous spiritual practices before he was blessed with the vision of the Divine Mother. His was quite a different case, as he did every-

thing to set an example to the world at large. Without devotion to Him, nothing will be of any avail. Sincere devotion is necessary. As the Master used to say, one realises the Lord only if one's yearning for Him is equal, in its intensity, to the combination of these three forms of attachments—a devoted woman's love for her husband, the love of a mother for her children, and a miser's fondness of his hoarded wealth. Only then is the Lord realised, and real peace and bliss attained. Of course, that yearning is not attained in a day ; and besides, without His Grace it does not come. Therefore one has to practise spiritual disciplines every day, and pray to Him with tears in one's eyes : " O Lord, bestow Thy mercy on me. I am an ordinary human being. If out of mercy, Thou dost not reveal Thyself unto me, how will it be possible for me to have the vision of Thee ? Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on me, a weakling." Pray every day in this way. The more you weep for Him, the more will your mind be washed of its dirt. And in that purified mind, the Lord will become revealed. You have all taken to monastic life ; in His Name you have left off your hearth and home. Naturally you have a claim on Him. Feeling Him as your very own, you should press your claims on Him. He has brought you away from your beloved parents only with a view to show His grace, and He has given you shelter in Him and His organisation. Stay on, with complete self-surrender, at His doors. As Pava hari Baba told Swamiji, " Lie down, like a dog, at the door of the Master." Many a time did Swamiji repeat this statement to us. The dog does not leave its master's house. Whether

it is fed or not, whether it is beaten or treated cruelly, it does not go away to any other place. So also, having taken shelter in Him, we have to stay on at the door of the Master with an unswerving devotion. He would gain the goal, who would continue, till his end, to stay in the refuge provided by Him, without any consideration of whether he is well-fed or ill-fed, whether he is given sweetmeats to eat or bitter things. You are already under the Master's protection, and have gained a place in His organisation. Why then should you be afraid ? As the Master used to say, " There is no fear of the boy falling down, if the father holds him by the hand." So long you are in the organisation under His protection, there is no fear. Know it for certain that He will protect you. You have not seen the Master, but you have seen us. We are His servants who have taken shelter at His feet, and you are hearing about Him from our lips. This is indeed your good fortune. The next generation will not be able to see us even. It is for this reason that Swamiji founded this organisation. The Master will abide in this organisation for many a century for the good of the world. From this time onwards, His work will be done through the power of this organisation. You should always remember that the loyalty to the Order is loyalty to the Master—to obey the will of the Order is to obey Him. As desired by the Master, Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) himself established this Math. And what we say, that also is for the good of the world—for your good. We have not come to cheat the world. Whatever is right, that alone we speak. Every one of those who

are here, is daily making some progress in spiritual life. You are also improving. Believe this, that our Lord is extremely fond of those who have taken refuge in Him. He protects in every possible way those who take shelter in Him with their body, mind and speech. Giving up your attachment to the objects of senses, you have come here to realise God—to have abiding peace. You want peace. Spend your days in complete resignation to Him and trust in His protection. He is sure to do good to you, and give you peace. Your duty is to obey His command, and lead your life in the way He has shown. Being monks, you should particularly eliminate from you these two—lust and greed. Purity and sincerity should be the fundamental principles with you. The Master forgives everything, but never duplicity in conduct. He does not allow in this organisation those who take to some other ideal, or practise hypocrisy of any kind. Such, he removes from it. Honest souls alone can get on here.

Monk: Please bless me so that I can ever stay on under the Master's protection. And, Maharaj, many a time the mind becomes agitated in ever so many ways, and consequently I feel great want of peace. Please advise me as to what I should do under the circumstances.

With great tenderness, the Swami said: Yes, my boy, I shower my blessings on you. May you stay under the Master's protection and gain the goal of human life! As for the troubles of your mind, do not pay much attention towards them. Don't you know that the Master is the greatest embodiment of purity? If

you think of His form, and take His holy Name, you will notice that all these mental agitations would be dispelled, and they would never be allowed to gather strength. Whenever you are troubled with any kind of agitation in the mind, you should pray to Him with tears in your eyes: "O Lord, I am weak. Do Thou protect me. If Thou doest not save me, who else will do so. I am Thy servant who has taken shelter in Thee." In this way, you should represent everything to Him. Then surely you will get response to your prayers. Do you get up very early in the morning? Do not be sleeping after 3 or 4 a.m. Why should a monk be sleeping after that? Take light food at night; then you will find that you are awake by 3 or 3-30 a.m. after a refreshing sleep. The Master used to say, "Night meal must be like tiffin." We take very light food at night. This became our habit even from the time we used to visit the Master.

Just then the monk in charge of the Math stores prostrated before the Swami and said that a devotee had sent some money for special worship and offerings to the Master in memory of his dead wife. On hearing this, the Swami said, "The Master could never accept food offered at the time of ceremonies in honour of the dead. You may communicate this to the devotee. How can we give his offering to the Master, when we know this fact? The Master is not a doll to play with, nor is he the creation of somebody's imagination. Our Master here is a living presence, my boy. If there is any impropriety in his worship, he would instantly make it known."

## THE SEARCH FOR UNITY

*By Charles Baudouin*

[Dr. Baudouin is a disciple of Emile Coue and the best scientific exponent of the Nancy School of Psychology founded by Coue. In the following paragraphs, which form his marginal notes to the work of Dr. Edmond Privat in French entitled "Wisdom of the East : Beyond Religion" (published by Rieder, Paris), he points out how to-day the horizon of the Westerner in the study of religion has widened vastly from the days of 'deism' in the 18th century, and shows, by reference to the contents of Dr. Privat's book, how it bears ample witness to this fact.]

**S**INCE the beginning of the eighteenth century, many of the thinkers of the West have refused to take their stand on any definite group of dogmas pertaining to any existing religion. From that time they had opened before them but two courses: either to reject all religious thinking, or the conviction that behind the multiplicity of forms, a common truth resides and demands our investigation. It is this second course alone which concerns us here.

It led in the first place to 'deism' characteristic of the eighteenth century, and of which the principle is to investigate unity in, and by means of, reason. This is apparently the most legitimate manner of investigating unity. But in spite of this fact, was this intellectualism, applied to matters pertaining to belief, the best method for this end? Was it not, to say the least, somewhat premature? Did it not pass by the side of its object without attaining it? Is this latter truly, predominantly, or primarily the domain proper for the intellect? Whatever we might do, deism will remain associated in our minds with the name of Voltaire and his unforgettable sarcasms. If this attitude would claim to effect the unity of religions, it is disquieting to see it so wanting in res-

pect towards them. It is above all sensible to the fanatic aspects of religion, to their ridiculous or absurd sides. It was perhaps, it was without doubt, a necessary step. But, when all is said, will not these hot-heads have on us their first effect in making us turn away from religious research altogether? More than finding at the basis of religions a living unity, deism appears to repell them all, and to build over them a new structure which is devoid of roots and holds itself up in emptiness, like a spider's web gray and pale oscillating by means of systems.

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In the nineteenth century, a Victor Hugo would take a place which is altogether different; for it is as a veritable mystic, and not merely as a man of logic, that the great poet takes up the effort towards a synthesis and a progression beyond. It is surprising to see also how much the originality of his position had been misunderstood by his age, and it is instructive to see how the fact that one is celebrated beyond all measures is not a guarantee that one would be understood. Superficial critics, misguided by their political preference—by his violent anti-clerical feelings, and their own lack of the proper spirit of in-

vestigation—have early labelled Hugo as being a deist after the fashion of Voltaire and the “free thinkers.” If some well-meaning thinkers have not seen in him a follower of M. Homais, they have only just missed him. It is only a little time ago that people have begun to take note of the fact that Victor Hugo was a mystic.

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We have just referred to the effort for synthesis and progression—it would have been better to say progression than synthesis. Hugo did not know much of India and nothing of China. The list of stages which he mentions in the open called *Dieu* is as follows: Atheism, Scepticism, Manicheism, Paganism, Mosaism, Christianity, Rationalism, beyond which he tries to venture into the new ‘which has not yet got a name.’ The series remains on the whole unlinear, and he sees this line vertically ascending according to the conception of progress which was natural to his age. This is very good, but has it been noticed in this, how it is on the whole purely Western in character? The world of Hugo, which is however very big, remains, if one thinks about it seriously, a Mediterranean world. This becomes evident from the *legende des Siecles*; this is confirmed by *Dieu*.

Besides this fact, the ascending symbolic scale of Hugo bears witness, certainly, to the metaphysical virtues of an authentic kind, but surely not of one of them, namely, humility. It is full of the pride of progress. “Tell me, would you like to go further than to where Amos ever went?” This is based on the will to power, and even on the will to perform and to make a record: and this also is very much Occidental.

The comparison is instructive if we now open the book of Edmond Privat, not to put him in opposition either to Voltaire or to Hugo, which would be ridiculous, and which the author himself would be the last to permit us to do. But we shall take the points of distinction, and we wish here to place the outlook of the modern epoch side by side with the witness of the past. To the list taken from the songs of Hugo, let us compare the series of chapters of Edmond Privat: Islam, Bahai, Zoraster, Hindus, disciples of Buddha, Nirvana, Confucious, Lao-Tse. The European has, within the period of less than a century extended his horizon so that it covers the whole world. Above all, India and China have made their entry into their world of thought.

It is because of this that the series could no more be unlinear. It is no more possible to pretend that all the religions rise one above the other in an indefinite progression after the manner of the stages in a Chaldean temple. From the time we give admission into our visual area the great thoughts of Asia, this architecture is no more possible. Other dimensions are introduced. It is not so much any more the question of a vertical series, nor of piling Pelion on Ossa—this original sin of Occidental Titans. We have to enlarge ourselves after the manner of the Gangetic plains and the Yellow Country; we have to place our principal foundations side by side, according to a horizontal plan. It is no more permissible for us to confront them except with a sentiment of mutual respect.

It is in this spirit that Prof. Mas-son-Oursel built up recently his *Com-*

*parative Philosophy*—by placing three civilisations whose masses would balance one another, viz., Europe, India, and China, of which he proposes to study the parallel evolution. It is in the same spirit that Edmond Privat conceives to-day his exploration “beyond the Religions.”

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This respectful attitude is the right one for a scholar faced with the diversity and multiplicity of facts. William James, in his *Religious Experiences*, has familiarised us with it. Do not look down upon any experience, leave each one of them to express itself freely, thus will each of them give out its whole meaning, and the agreement between them will constitute the precipitate which will naturally be deposited at the bottom of the clear liquid.

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It is surely in this manner that one ought to set about the task. It is in this manner and not by wishing to build, under the pretext of synthesis, a complicated and new system, composed of pieces arbitrarily borrowed from all other systems which will always have the aspect of a miscellaneous collection or of an exhibition of the products of various colonies—a collection of so many theosophical dreams. An attentive listening, a silent and careful confrontation, and nothing more—it is thus that the little book of Edmond Privat proceeds. It is in this feature that, without being very new in any of its parts, without even being ambitious in the synthesis that it proposes to effect, it confronts one with its very attractive, fully human quality which is very estimable, pure and spiritual.

In fact, he could have permitted himself more to a clarification, in the first place, of the physiognomy of each doctrine without fearing an opposition, which would have thrown into relief the value of their resemblance. By avoiding the irregularities and angularities, he gives to the doctrines a form which is somewhat too soft. No one would say that it is by any means an easy task to set up a unity when one has refused to take notice of the contradictions. It is better to face them so as to be able to resolve them soon. But, it is in this that would consist the great task which remains to be undertaken. The little book that is before us does not call for as much, and it is one of its merits that it does not lay claim to much. Within the limits of the work, it fulfils its aim. It does not address itself so much to philosophers and to savants—to those who seek for “the God of philosophers and savants”—as to simple men of good-will. It would very well be a guide to them. I have tried the experiment of reading the book with a boy of twelve years who took interest in it and found in it matter for thought.

For it is in this manner that the unity is brought out: “We gather together, all of us, as travellers who began to quarrel on a certain day—for one wanted Water, the other, Aqua and a third Voda. The fact was that they were all thirsty and all the three wanted water.” (p. 112). If on the contrary religion “should serve to set up new barriers, inflame new hatreds, set fire to new fires of the inquisition, it loses its right for the conquest of souls. It becomes a

poison more dangerous than others " (P. 26).

Unity is in the common Presence which is known to be in each being : " In the erudite and modest Bralmin, in the cow, in the elephant, even in the dog, and also in the eater of dog's flesh, the sages see the Eternal " (p. 45). Religion is to be conscious of this unity. As says Tao, because of this " the heart of the sage is no more his own ; he puts in its place others " (Words of the Epigraph). This shifting of the point of view destroys egotism in the heart as it creates at the same time objectivity in the intellect. This fundamental identity of moral verity and intellectual verity, so strongly expressed by our Pascal, has been seen before him by the Buddhists : " Egotism is an illusion, an ignorant view-point, which we judge wrongly in others " (P. 56).

The Tao, like the Gospel, has placed kindness above force: " Water that flows in places which are the most low, teaches you that kindness and humility finish by triumphing over force, however hard " (p. 83).

It is thus that the religions meet, and this meeting will take place the better when the spirit shall be installed more strongly on the basis of the primal principle of the unique Presence. The consciousness of the unity of beings is the condition and the very material of the unity of religions. One comes back to it whatever route one takes. Emerson also concludes : " The highest revelation is that God is in each man " (p. 107).

One sees that this unity is not so much, as in the case of deism, that of the intellect which constructs the systems of the world, but rather that of

the sentiment and that of action,—of a sentiment that commands action ; it is the unity of practical reason.

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There is another key for unity, which consists of images and symbols.

The Chinese Tao signifies and teaches *the way*. That is why he instilled enthusiasm into the first Christian missionaries who made his acquaintance, and one of them, Montucci, wished to see in him a Chinese prophet who announced the message of him who said: " I am the way, the truth and the life " (p. 84). The analogy is pushed very far in the details according to certain of the parables. Poetry celebrates the Buddha " with a wounded lamb which he carries on his shoulders " (p. 61) so much like our Good Shepherd. The religion of Christ and that of Mithra " were once so near to one another that they had the same Noel (Christmas). The 25th December was the anniversary of Mithra, symbol of light and of truth, mediator between man and God by virtue of sacrifice " (p. 34).

These relations are known to historians. Ed. Privat, who does not take up the profession of a historian, limits himself by calling our attention to some of them which lead us to the highest teaching and throw light in our investigation for unity. This investigation could be followed still further in the same direction, in the light of the 'Analytical Psychology', which, notably with Jung, has shown us how we may consider symbols and the thousands of myths of humanity in order to find in them their vital meanings and their striking



ing convergence. We have here reached the antipodes of the intellectualism of the deists, and it is here however that we find ourselves at the heart of the vital unity. In this sense, one should support the paradox that mythology is more real than theology and that they are no more one.

Symbols seem at first sight to be more arbitrary than ideas, but it is just here that an intellectualist errs: it is a mistake to think that the idea is our starting point, and that one clothes it afterwards with a glistening drapery of symbolism. But as a matter of fact, it is the symbol that

is given first, and its translation into rational ideas comes only afterwards and remains, as all translation is bound to be always an impoverishment of the original text. This is why it will be always more true to refer to the Kingdom of Heaven, not that it is ..., but that it "*is comparable...*" That is why here, as in the case of all objects which are essential, poetry is truer than prose. One could give with regard to this abundant proof of a scholarly type, but the few examples of which we have reminded are perhaps sufficient to make it understood.

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## POWER OF SILENCE

*By Prof. S. R. Sarma, M.A.*

[Mr. S. R. Sarma is the professor of history in Wellington College, Satara. His reflections on the power of silence brings home to the mind of city dwellers how their environment has cut them off from one of the great healing and creative forces of Nature.]

HE life of man is full of contrasts. From the cradle to the grave man swings like a pendulum betwixt a tear and a smile. Through sunshine and rain, through summer and winter, through night and day, we pass as it were over a chequer-board of happiness and misery. The poor envy the rich and the rich the poor. The married envy the single and the single the married. Youth covets the repose of old age and age envies the impetuosity of youth. Man never is but ever to be blessed. And woman too. Each thinks the other happier. Beggars dream of the riches of kings. But kings alone know how uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. The ignorant feel that the learned are hap-

py. But the learned know that ignorance is bliss where it is folly to be wise. Yet men proclaim that it is better to be a discontented Socrates than a contented fool. And fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Is the world full of fools or wise men? Our census reports take note of everything but the senses of men. They might indeed count the criminals and idiots in gaols and asylums, but they leave out of account such as live in houses or walk the streets. We live in a world where wisdom is assessed by counting heads. And since the wisdom or foolishness of the majority is to be determined by the votes of the majority—the only answer to be expected is that the majority are wise.

But ask another question : Are the majority happy ? Some will say that those alone are happy who have joined the majority ! Ask the rulers of men, and they will answer that a vast majority of their subjects are happy ; and the rest would have been more miserable but for them. Ask each individual separately, and more often than not, every he and she will tell you that but for X, Y and Z he or she *would be* quite happy.

What makes then for this dubiety of answer ? It is self-deception. Most of us are like fish out of water. The glitter of dry sand and the flutter of our desperate struggle are not the true elements of our being. To find the true element we must dive deeper. The waters of life are always ruffled at the surface. The face of the ocean is full of commotion. There is peace only in profounder depths. There is a profundity that every one can reach. Be he poor or be he rich, be he young or be he old ; both he and she can reach it. The secret is known to the educated and the uneducated alike. It is spelt SILENCE !

To feel the power of silence one must first of all assume silence. At first there will be only a void, a vacancy. Then a sense of infinity and eternity will dawn. All limitations will disappear like darkness before sunrise. Even like the rays of the rising sun a light will gradually illumine the unplumbed depths of your being. Your spirit will be suffused with a deep sense of joy, a heavenly glow, an inexpressible ecstatic feeling, a rapture beyond words. This is an experience that every one has undergone at one time or another. Every one is free to revive it as often as he or she pleases. It has a won-

derful potency. It is creative. It refreshes one through and through. It rejuvenates, vivifies and gives a fresh start whenever one feels its need. The power of silence ! Ah, yes—the silence of the night that brings sweet repose to every tired being. What a blessing it is, to retire from all our toils and sink into the arms of sleep. To forget, though it be for a few hours, to forget all our trials and tribulations. Kind Nature makes a clean slate every night and commands us to write afresh every morning. To begin a new life every day, what a privilege ! But how many take advantage of this ! Night, rest and silence, creative silence,—these return to us again and again. But we are in love with noise and restlessness, the keynotes of our civilization.

Work and wealth-getting are necessary. We want not to rest for ever. But work after rest is more fruitful and what our civilization needs is not more of work, but work for more. The rest of the unemployed is restless. The rest of the over-worked is equally restless. What is wanted, therefore, is equi-distribution of both work and rest, real rest, creative rest, among a larger number. Even the wealthy of our times are restless. They suffer from the itch for getting more. More of what ? Wealth ? No *ill-th*. They want to produce more, earn more, accumulate more. What they, unfortunately, succeed in producing, earning and accumulating, is greater restlessness for themselves and the rest of the world. For one thing and another our modern world is too noisy. 'Getting and spending, we lay waste our power.'

Our raving civilization would be the better for being made noiseless, if

some one could discover or invent a silenser. Silence in the streets, silence in the factories and workshops,—but not the silence of Death. Perhaps this is impossible. Then let civilization go its noisy round. Individual man must cultivate for himself the habit of occasionally withdrawing into silence. He will be the better for doing so. For silence is recuperative. Jaded nerves, excitable tempers, and premature old-age are the casualties of our civilization. These cannot be cured by greater excitement. Here silence alone is curative, naught else is. If we are sufficiently thoughtful and discerning, the world around us is eloquent about the power of silence. The stars of midnight and the planets are not dead and inert. They are innumerable and ceaselessly active.

Their activity illuminates the darkness of our world. But they are silent. Our countrysides that feed and recuperate us are full of creative activity, but not half as noisy as our towns and cities. Our homes are so many havens of silence set in the midst of a noisy world. The silence of these is not of the Tower of Silence. The best and most costly of even machines are the more silent ones like the Rolls-Royce car and the Zeppelin. The most perfect of machines, the human body, is most silent though ceaselessly active inside while outwardly at rest. The vital activity of the human heart whispers an eloquent and endless sermon of silence to every soul to dive deep into the heart of the universe and discover the creative secrets of the power of silence.

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## SCIENCE AND RELIGION

*By Swami Aseshananda*

[Swami Aseshananda of the Ramakrishna Mission gives a running survey of some of the latest conclusions of science which bring it nearer to the world-view favoured by religion, and states the reasons why a more friendly understanding between these two branches of human culture is in the best interests of humanity.]

**T**HE legacy of science is of inestimable value in modern days. In various fields, the progress achieved by it has resulted in the advancement of civilisation. Science has facilitated the growth of culture and human happiness. What was inconceivable a century ago has become a fact of achievement to-day. With the advent of steam-engine, aeroplane, telegraphic communication and broadcasting, distance has been annihilated, and the whole of humanity has been brought into closer unity. The old and the new worlds are now

enjoying an intimate touch of nearness and affinity.

Twentieth century science has also created a revolution in the realm of thought. It has discarded the mechanistic view of the world and has come to believe that the order, beauty and co-ordination in the universe reveal that it is not a chaos but a cosmos. The old conception of looking upon the world as a huge machine is no more considered true. There is a regular system—an organised method of activity in the phenomena of Nature. The Darwinian theory of

chance variation and natural selection has been modified in the light of later researches. The trend of the idealist is towards creative or emergent evolution. "The world process aims at an idea or a purpose which is being progressively realised through inanimate and animate Nature. The universe is intelligent. There is a plan, a distinctive motive, which causes nature to work under a teleological will. The fulfilment of a value is the immanent urge that brings into play the great drama which is being enacted from amoeba to man. One continuous process runs through all the evolutionary acts." Bergson calls this primeval motive force as "*Élan vital*" or creative urge. "How could this mighty superstructure be built by blind matter with fortuitous combination of atoms?" he asks.

On a materialistic assumption it is difficult to explain the origin of life and consciousness. How can dull dead matter produce life which evolves and grows from within, adjusts itself to circumstances and reproduces itself. Freaks of Nature can never produce life. Darwin explained everything by simple mechanical causation. His eminence as the formulator of the most far-reaching theory was indisputable in the last century. All credit to his patient toil and hard, scrutinising research. The present epoch strikes a new note. Scientists have become more cautious in their assertions. The riddles of the universe cannot be solved by mass movements of electrical particles of matter. Materialism cannot furnish the key to the complexity of world process, and it encounters a superb difficulty in explaining the facts of life. Life is governed by its own

laws. Aristotle gives a beautiful imagery and compares the working of a living body to that of a democratic State. He says, "The animal organism must be conceived after the similitude of a well-governed commonwealth. When order is once established in it, there is no more need of a separate monarch to preside over each several task. The individuals each play their assigned part as is ordered, and one thing follows another in its accustomed order. So in animals, there is the same orderliness, Nature taking the place of custom and each part naturally doing its work as Nature has composed them." Conscious behaviour cannot be accounted for by mere physiological causes. An intelligent will is clearly manifest. Otherwise, a chance movement of the types in a printing press could have produced such original treatises and works of rare beauty as Shakespear's Hamlet or Dante's Divine Comedy.

Not only in the world of life and mind but also in the domain of inert matter, naturalism is receiving a severe attack even from the hands of physicists. The enunciation of quantum and relativity theories have created a great stir among scientists. Some reputed physicists are revising their views about the Nature of the universe. Sir William Jeans holds that Nature is non-materialistic, and the last traces of materialism have dwindled away. He postulates the existence of a universal mind. In his famous book *The Mysterious Universe*, Jeans writes: "The phenomena of the material world are the effects of the way in which the underlying mental reality is manifested to us. The universe is witness to the working of a mental reality that has kinship

with our mind. When the ultimate reality is mind, the cosmos looks more like a great thought than a great machine." Sir Arthur Eddington too, propounds a similar view. All the fundamental attributes of physical things are functions of velocity and this can be reduced to energy. There are various kinds of energy—kinetic, potential, electro-magnetic as well as the energy of heat and light. Energy may change its form, but it can neither be created, nor annihilated. The sum total of energy will always remain the same. But what is energy? Physicists can tell us of the quantity of its mathematical ratio, but not the nature of its quality. They remain silent on that point. But effort is a kind of energy which every one exerts at the time of willing and we are conscious of it through immediate knowledge. Hence a possible hypothesis has been advanced by Eddington that physical energy may, in its real nature, be will—some kind of psychical energy.

"The matrix of the world," he says, "is a spiritual entity, akin to our consciousness. The primordial element is mind, and matter is derivative from it. This does not imply that objective Nature does not exist. It only means that in its final analysis, the material world is found to be spiritual—an idea of the universal mind." From this startling hypothesis, our outlook is sure to get a re-orientation. Modern science will profoundly influence human thought and give a new orientation to man's ideas in all fields.

The advancement of science will, without doubt, sound the death-knell of institutional religion. Critical thinkers will either detach themselves

from the traditional folds, or become indifferent to dogmatic creeds. What is the relationship between science and religion? Are they antagonistic like light and darkness? Our answer is in the negative. They are complementary and not contradictory. The acquisition of knowledge and betterment of human life are the avowed aims of both science and religion. By religion, we do not mean a set of stereotyped formulas which are thrust upon the credulous adherents by a privileged hierarchy of ecclesiastical dignitaries. Truth cannot be the private possession of a few aristocrats, who claim that they are the sole repositories of all the secrets of Nature and of Divine confidence. Religion is the unfoldment of Divinity—a re-discovery of one's own spiritual heritage. It connotes the indissoluble tie of relationship which eternally exists between the individual soul and its counter-part, the "over-soul". This affinity is a natural and fundamental one, lying at the core of the saint or the sinner—the heathen or the Christian. Like the breath of life, it throbs in all sentient hearts. We live, move and have our being on account of this vitalising principle. This thread of unity can never be broken. A rational religion must eschew all privileges of vested interests. It must purify itself from the dross of sectarianism and lift its head above the smoky region of distrust and mutual fight.

A genuine faith, which science may be ready to accept, rests on the principle that man shall be his own master. He must have liberty to form his own opinions, unmolested by any external authority. He must have full freedom to carry into effect his own re-

solves. No theory should be accepted unless it is accompanied by a substantial proof. The decree of any master, no matter how eminent or honoured be his name, will not be received, if his statements contradict reason. All super-natural intervention and miraculous way of explaining things will be unceremoniously rejected. Everything is to be settled by an appeal to reason and sound judgment. All organised religions think that they are acting under divine commission. In virtue of that authority, they assert that they have a prerogative to make men surrender their intellectual convictions. Even granting that their claims are based on unimpeachable credentials, a conscientious mind will never be agreeable to obey such a command. It was for this that many scientists of old preferred to die rather than recant their views. Imprisonment, excommunication or burning alive at the stake could not deter them from their purpose. The names of Bruno and Galileo are ever memorable in the pages of history.

The time has come when religion must be more liberal and tolerant in its views than before. It should win over science to its side by sympathising with the aspirations of science.

But the question may arise as to how this can be done in the face of the terrible havoc and mischief which science does to mankind at the present time. By inventing poison gas, machine gun and torpedoes, has not science aggravated the misery of man and caused the destruction of innumerable innocent souls? The argument is legitimate. None can deny the facts. But this is only a dark side of the picture. The utility of

science and religion cannot be neglected on account of their failures and defects. True it is that science kills, but it also heals. To assess it rightly, the positive contribution it makes should also be taken into account. In spite of its misuses, it has scattered material comforts in the pathway of life. It has elevated the condition of the poor and has helped to enfranchise the masses. Some of its achievements are solid and enduring. The utterance of Bruno is so bold and assertive that it can never be forgotten, "You who sentence me are in greater fear than I who am condemned." Such was the statement of a hero who preferred a spirited death to a cowardly life.

The prolific blessings with which science has endowed man cannot be of negligible value. Nothing in the universe is of unmixed good. The defect of science lies not in principle, but in application. The fault attaches not to the object, but to the person who handles it. For the perpetration of the wrongs, if we calumniate the whole world of science and pass adverse judgment on it, it will be extremely uncharitable. Due to misconception and prejudice, if we abandon the pursuit of science, the condition of the world will be utterly grave. Humanity will have to retrace its steps and go back to the state of ignorance and superstition. History tells us what a gloomy shadow fell on this planet, when scientific investigations were stopped by arbitrary laws in the middle ages. The suppression of science kept knowledge in a stagnant condition for many centuries. Every struggle for expansion was suppressed. Darkness pre-

vailed everywhere. Liberal thoughts were vehemently condemned.

Hence facts testify that humanity cannot do without science. Neither can it breathe without the moral atmosphere of religion. Both are necessary for the fulfilment of life. If they work hand in hand, the future will be bright. Each should keep itself within its legitimate bounds without trespassing on the regions of the other. History need not repeat the bitter conflict between these two contending parties. The equilibrium of society depends upon the abstention from this controversy. Antagonistic pretensions must stop and give way to mutual friendship. Religion should give allowance to free independent thought, and cease from tyrannising men for their honest

convictions. Science too must be more cautious and keep the purity of its motives. It should know that its power and prestige will increase only when it creates and not destroys. The clean and definite object of both should be to evolve a better type of humanity and a civilisation more humane and just. They should further the cause of social advancement and bind mankind through unity and concord. The task of both will be to offer a support in the days of tribulation, and give solace in the hours of dejection. Science will contribute to man's physical needs and religion to his spiritual wants. Let each shake hands with the other and be mutual allies.

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## INDIA AND CHINA

*By Bhai Manilal C. Parekh*

[Bhai Manilal C. Parekh is a well-known religious teacher and author. For the past twenty-five years he has been a teacher of religion, first as a missionary of the Brahmo Samaj, next as one of the Christian Church, and afterwards as an independent teacher of Bhagavata Dharma. He has travelled extensively in Asia, Europe and America. In his present writing on India and China, largely based on his firsthand knowledge, besides giving a lively and impressive estimate of the grand old civilization of China, he pointedly draws attention to some of the marked national traits of the Chinese people worthy of our study.]

**T**HE opening of the Chinese Hall at the Shantiniketan in the early part of this year is an event of much significance in the history of both India and China. Apart from the fact that it is a renewal of an old connection between these two great countries, a connection that was both spiritual and cultural in the best sense of the term, the opening of the Hall has in it the promise of creating a new relationship between them such

as was not possible in those early days. It is true the heroic missionaries of Buddhism carried their religion to China and to such other countries as Japan, Tibet, etc., and thereby dug a channel through which flowed for centuries some of the best Aryan culture to these lands. Much was done also by the pilgrims of China that came to India by way of deepening and broadening that channel, and what was done by the Buddhist mis-

sionaries from India and the Chinese pilgrims constitutes one of the noblest chapters in the annals of religious and cultural history of the world.

But even at its best this intercourse between China and India was only one-sided. The Chinese knew about and borrowed from India than the people of the latter country did, and undoubtedly India was the loser in this one-sided commerce in culture. The most unfortunate aspect of the matter, however, is that we are altogether unconscious of this fact. While talking of China and Japan, we always emphasize the fact of their borrowing our culture and religion, and we are apt to do this a little too much.

Had we been less self-conscious, we would have remembered that China is a country that is great in its own right, and that it has a civilization and a culture which are as great and original as any in the world. We have been entirely oblivious of the fact that even in the past, when China was receiving much of our culture and thereby adding to its own treasures, we too could have learnt much relating to the best in human civilization and culture from it and have been the better for it.

In regard to this matter the present writer had some very interesting personal experiences which he would like to relate. About eight years ago he left India for the U.S.A., and as he was to stay for some time in California he went *via* China and Japan. As he had heard a great deal about this latter country and its phenomenal rise in the modern world ever since he was a boy, and as he had a letter of introduction to the well-known Christian leader, Kagawa of that country,

he thought of staying in Japan for a fortnight, a thing which he unfortunately could not do. What he wants to emphasize, however, is that China was altogether absent in his calculations, and he did not think of that country at all as deserving of study. According to the prevailing standards of efficiency and progress, China was a backward country, and as such hardly worth a visit. In his mind, as in that of many others, there was an amazing ignorance about China and its civilization, and it was this that was primarily responsible for his indifference in the matter.

However, he had to stop for three or four days in China, one day in Hong Kong and three days in Shanghai, and what little he saw during this extremely short period of the people of that country was a great and unique experience. He felt that he was face to face with one of the greatest civilizations in the world, and the experience that he had of the Chinese people was in every sense an eye-opener. What struck him most was their amazing vitality, their sobriety, their patience and power of endurance, their orderliness as it manifested itself under the most adverse circumstances in the Chinese town called Chapei in Shanghai, and the last but not the least their love of beauty. The impression that he had was, however, of a total kind, and he came away from China leaving full fifty per cent of the pride that he had until then in the civilization and culture of his own land.

Although this was the first impression that the present writer had of China, he must say here that whatever more he came to know of the Chinese people in the U.S.A., etc.,



confirmed it, and the more he knew the Chinese the more respect he came to have for them. He came to know a large number of students of both sexes and many nationalities in some of the most important educational institutions of the U.S.A., but among them all, the Chinese students impressed him for the depth of their character than those of any other country. Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of these young men and women of China was this, *viz.*, that they were the least parochial or national in the narrow sense of the term. Loving their country as much as the nationals of any other country do, they, however, never thrust it or their civilization on the attention of other people. This was, unfortunately for us as Indians, in strong contrast to what we do ; not only do we not forget that we are Indians, but most of us are ever ready to emphasise that fact. The Chinese, on the other hand, practise great reserve in regard to this matter, and this reserve which is habitual with them testifies to their strength as a race, and their silence is certainly more eloquent than our much speaking.

One finds the same reserve among the Japanese students and sometimes it is carried to an excess, but there is a great difference between this and what one finds among the Chinese. The Japanese as a race are reserved because they are too self-conscious, and they do not know always where they stand. This statement would sound strange to some ears, but it is not the observation of one person but of several belonging to all nationalities that has confirmed it. The greatness that has come upon Japan suddenly has been too much

for it, and the people of this country are always afraid lest they be looked upon with suspicion by other people, and so they themselves start with suspicion of others. The present writer was told by an Englishman that while the Japanese are one of the most delightful people to meet with in their own land, they are far from so when outside Japan, and this observation was amply confirmed by the writer's own experience. The Japanese belong to a small island, and having been confined to it for centuries and millenniums, they are naturally insular, whereas the Chinese have always lived in a country that is continental in size, and due to this they have developed a kind of cosmopolitan consciousness. It has been said about them that they can live in any part of the world, the hottest as well as the coldest, and this is due to their marvellous physical vitality. There is something akin to this in their mental life, and they are perfectly at home in any social surrounding.

In addition to this, the Chinese as a race possess all the qualities which go to the making of a perfect gentleman. Dr. Kenneth J. Saunders, the well-known Buddhist scholar, once said to the present writer that a Chinese gentleman is the most perfect specimen of the kind, and the writer of this article has seen a number of such men among the Chinese. The same observation has been made by other people too. One finds among them some, both men and women, young and old, on whose faces shines a nobility that has come down to them for five thousand years, and this expresses itself equally in their manners which are unsurpassed by

anything that one may find elsewhere. The roots of this nobility and gentlemanliness go back to Confucius and even earlier, and the race has preserved the type and the characteristics all through the ages.

Indeed, this nobility of theirs is the ripe fruit of a civilization that has had a longer and more continuous life than any other. We of India are apt to speak of our civilization as the oldest, but it is doubtful if we do not have to yield in this respect to our neighbours, the Chinese. Not only is their civilization an older one, but it has been undoubtedly a more continuous, homogeneous and peaceful one on the whole than ours. For nearly three thousand years they have lived under one empire, and they have a common language and literature. Because of this, they have had ample time and leisure to cultivate and develop all the arts of peace, with the result that theirs is "the most perfect civilization of the world," to quote the words of another European. Innumerable men and women of Europe and America have come under the spell of this ancient and great civilization, and they have openly avowed their preference of it over their own.

The Chinese civilisation differs much from the Western civilisation even at its best in many respects. In mediæval times the Western nations were truly barbaric in comparison with the people of China, and violent as the Europeans have always been, they have been even more so in modern times. Since the growth of modern science and industrialism, this violence of theirs has expressed itself in the invention of new methods of killing one

another. Greed, exploitation, conquest, colonialism, and war have been the guiding motives of the Western civilization all through the ages and much more so in our own times. In refreshing contrast to this, we have in China a country, of the size of a continent almost, which, in spite of its having an Empire of its own for full three thousand years, has rarely surrendered itself to the greed of exploitation and lust of conquest. This is but too evident from the fact that the soldier has practically no place in the social hierarchy of the Chinese. This unfortunately is not true even of our own country which gave birth to two of the most non-violent religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. It is against the background of such non-violence and national unity that China has developed a culture and a civilisation, which represents the 'art of living' in one of its highest phases.

We, the people of India, can certainly learn much from the Chinese in regard to this art of living. Too long we have dealt in metaphysical negations and other-worldliness and have refused to plant our feet solidly upon this earth. The mysticism of India has certainly given to the people of the land something that is most valuable and that will always remain to us as a heritage of the greatest importance. It is this very mysticism which has given India the privileged position of being the spiritual teacher of the whole of Asia in the past. It is because of this that much of the best opinion of the world to-day looks to India for a message of that spirituality, which alone can bring healing to the nations of the world. The fact remains, nevertheless, that this mysticism or spirituality has been

attained at a tremendous cost to the nation, and that in the spirit of the Bhagavad Gita we could have devoted ourselves a little more to the 'art of living'. It is just in this matter, therefore, that we could have learnt many a valuable lesson from our neighbours, the Chinese, in the past, and can still learn from them something of this great art, since no other nation in the world has succeeded so well in balancing in its life all the elements of life as the Chinese. Both the State and the society are organised in that country on the basis of the grand moral principles of Confucius mediated to the entire people through its ancestor-worship and a profound filial piety. The foundation of the social hierarchy and of the State is reverence for age and wisdom, and happily for China there has been no caste-system to impose artificial barriers in the functioning of this authority of age and wisdom. It was because of this that the scholar of Confucian ethics was put in the position of civil authority all through the ages, and anybody could be such a scholar provided he had the talent. It is true this ancient culture is breaking down to-day under the stress of an industrial age, but in spite of all that it has suffered in the immediate past, this great culture is still vital, and it provides the necessary balance to many of the modern radical tendencies.

In addition to their great virtues of hand, head and heart, the Chinese have a sense of beauty which is peculiarly their own. This sense of theirs is an essential element in their 'art of living.' Their aestheticism strikes the eye of the stranger in China at once, and one sees it everywhere. Every word that

they paint with their brush is a beautiful picture, and because of this they are born painters. One has only to see some of the treasures of their art in the great museums of the U.S.A., and of Europe to realise what a high level they have reached in their appreciation and creation of true beauty.

The most remarkable thing about this aestheticism, however, is that it is not confined to some select circles or upper classes, but it pervades the entire people. The present writer had a most pleasant and surprising experience of this while he was in the U.S.A. The year 1930 was the Tercentenary year of the founding of Boston, and this great occasion in the life of that city of culture was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony. This celebration lasted for some weeks and it ended with a very remarkable procession. Nearly three hundred groups representing different interests, associations, races, etc., participated, and it extended over miles in length and took full seven hours to pass any particular point. What was still more remarkable about this procession was that every group had tried its utmost to invest its own section of the procession with a peculiar character and beauty. Among all these, however, the section that elicited universal admiration and applause, and that was considered to be the most beautiful of all, was that of the Chinese, and it was the creation of Chinese laundry-men and cooks in Boston. They were able to do this because the Chinese genius for art and beauty had expressed itself through them in spite of the fact that they were in a distant land and cut off from their own land for at least two generations. The universal

attraction of the so-called Chinese towns in every important city of the U.S.A., and in such cities as Rangoon, Singapore, etc., is due to the same fact, although very often these towns are far from representing the best or even the second best of Chinese life as it may be seen in China itself.

In addition to all this, one of the most important lessons that we as a people can learn from the Chinese is their self-assurance both as individuals and as a nation. They are the only people in Asia who have no inferiority-complex *vis-a-vis* the Europeans and Americans. Not only this. They in their heart of hearts look down upon the Western people as barbarians and as such raw and crude, and though they may be dominated by them politically, they refuse to be dominated in spirit. They are of all the people the least dazzled by the material conquests of the Western civilization. Even while they try to assimilate it to the extent that they may be able to defend themselves against its exploitation, they do this as men who are superior to the Western people. In this respect we have much to learn from them, for strange and unbelievable as the statement may seem to many, we of India have the worst inferiority-complex in all the world, whatever be the reason. Until recent times a white man, just because he was white, was a sort of demi-god to us, and we invested him with a kind of superstitious awe that had its origin, perhaps, in our high regard for the fair skin, a relic

of our ancient Aryan heritage. Varna has been the basis of our civilisation for ages, and the mere fact of a person having white skin has meant much to us always. Our idea of human beauty whether in man or woman, and especially in the latter, has been bound up too much with the white colour or rather the lack of colour which it really is. In addition to this, there has been a sort of cultural conquest of the country which is not the less real because we are not always conscious of it. All this has given us an awful inferiority-complex face to face with the people of the West, and the sooner we get rid of it the better. It is true as a people we are now learning the lesson of self-respect, but we need to do it at a rapid pace, and the example of our good neighbours, the Chinese, can be of great help to us in the matter.

These are but the random observations of a man who was in China for only four days and whose acquaintance with a few individuals among the Chinese has been but casual. Nevertheless, he has known enough of the people of China, their life and civilisation, their manners and character, to feel sure that they are one of the greatest races of the world, and that we have as much to learn from them as they from us. While we may teach them our mysticism and spirituality, let us learn from them at the same time some of the most valuable lessons in the 'art of life.'

# THE APPEAL OF YOGA TO NEW YORKERS

*By Dorothy Kruger*

[In the following paragraphs Miss Dorothy Kruger of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, presents some lines of thought that must have occurred to many an earnest soul in the West who has made a careful and reverent study of the principles of Vedanta. A perusal of these lines would be an eye-opener to ultra-modernised Indians who have come to believe their gold to be nothing but tinsel.]

**I**N New York, to withdraw from a social group for culture of spirituality, especially when the spiritual mind is being awakened by the sublime notes of the East, is difficult ; for, if one were to turn away from the pleasures of the senses at the height of one's power of enjoyment for a life of continence, or to renounce the reading of new enlivening books for those of scriptures and biographies of holy men, or to deny the palate dainty indulgence in the pleasures of the table for a simple and restricted diet, or to give up the thrill of the drama for an endless course of lectures on abstract philosophy, it is, in the people's view, like entombing oneself alive. They think man must at any cost be diverted from such a course.

Of Yoga they know little, these well meaning people ; and what little they have gathered incidentally is, from the reading of adventurous experiences, military and spiritual, of Englishmen staying in India. Of Western philosophy they have perhaps a better intellectual understanding, for publishers include popular science and philosophy in their choice of books sent through the press in a steady stream. Since to these self-appointed guardians the burden of Yoga is only renunciation, it is, according to them, quite an imprac-

tical system of thought. Western philosophy makes no such impractical demand. People holding such perverted views are not in a mood to hear you even if you point out to them how, for instance, the study of the philosophy of Socrates in school has not impressed their minds deeply enough to rouse in them the desire to think clearly and act reasonably and to be devoted to truth and virtue—which constitute the demand made on man by the doctrines of Socrates. Having never fostered the growth of philosophic spirit by the renunciation of wrong desires, they find themselves helpless, without any inner strength to fall back upon, when the evil effects of their own actions rebound on them, making them blind to everything except their unendurable pain.

When the mind of the spiritual aspirant has been weaned away from this kind of illusion, and it has cooled down under the effects of the mental and moral disciplines of Yoga, it begins to be free from fears, and comes to know—that till now it was afraid of death and consequently of life also. The aspirant comes to recognise that his mad pursuit of every passing desire was only a deceptive device employed for keeping the mind scattered and thereby prevent it from thinking of betrayals, old age and

loss of livelihood, which he instinctively knows to be relative ultimates. Indulgence in the cravings of sense-organs was for him a means of escape from thoughts about these unpleasant facts. Never had he the courage to face any ugly fact of relative existence.

This is the experience of many men and women, whose lives are being considerably influenced by Yoga through the medium of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda centre of New York. After four years of steady attendance at classes on the Yoga, the Upanishads, the lives of various Incarnations of God, etc., these students, of whom some came at first out of intellectual curiosity and others to acquire knowledge of Yoga for use towards material ends, have now come to entertain but the single idea of purifying their minds so that the Spirit within them can one day fully express Itself. No more is left for them the idea of using the power of Yoga to make the body healthy or strong or beautiful, to increase the income, to protect house and property, and to possess others. They want to keep the body healthy only to forget it in the remembrance of their Ideal. Money, they have come to consider, is good, not for the trimming of the body but to succour those whom Maya would drown in floods, famines and illiteracy. House, property, money, family, are not objects to be possessed but treasures to be held in trust for Him, the Lord of all that is.

Never having had any experience of dependence upon anything other than our own efforts, we, the students, are inclined towards Jnana Yoga on first learning of the four Yogas suitable for the four different tem-

peraments. We are now primarily interested in thought. Thought is the rich milk worked by discrimination, the churning rod of Jnana. Because we see through a glass darkly, we now see instead of God different people and different forms and different colours and lights and shadows. But after years of meditation, may be after lives, we shall know directly "I am He." Then we shall know that God alone exists, and all else is an illusion. Then we shall know that God exists in the heart of every living entity, and existing there, He exists everywhere. Of the disciplines of this Jnana we are not frightened; for having lived so long in competition instead of co-operation with others, our wills are strong. Of course, as in all Yogas, there are the mental and moral disciplines. Besides, one must discriminate night and day that one's real nature is that of the Spirit, and that the body and mind, relatively speaking, exist only as instruments for the actual realisation of the Spirit. We try to live as a witness of our mental changes. We try not to identify ourselves with any particular state of mind. As Romans sat in the amphitheatre and watched contestants in the arena, so we would watch the higher part of the mind overcome the lower. Our attitude is to let the dead bury the dead whether the corpse be that of our mother or our own.

Finally, after trying in vain for months to rise to the level of the thought embodied in the dictum 'I am He' our egos are daunted by the complete failure of our meditation, and humbled by the insufficiency of our will-power, we learn that in this age, especially in New York where even the air is

surcharged with the rush of living, it is impossible for anyone to practise Jnana Yoga with success. How can we, our whole lives revolving round body and mind, deny these two and be honest with ourselves? How can we attain actual discrimination between the Real and the unreal? Even if we recognize an object to be unreal, can we renounce it entirely? Would there not be hesitancy in tearing out of ourselves all emotion, in sweeping aside all human relationships as we do the pawns off a chess board with the back of our hand when tired of play? We are advised to practise a more natural path of Yoga.

Raja Yoga too deals with the mind. Through this Yoga our mind becomes controlled, the will strengthened, and the power of concentration increased for the realization of eternal peace. Time proves the joy of any worldly experience to be but a bubble in a wave. Misery is the sure consequence of such joys. To avoid that one must stop contact between Purusha or Spirit and Prakriti or matter. Matter is dead, the only apparent life in it being a reflection of the consciousness we impart to it when we identify ourselves with matter. When we, who are in essence Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, forget our real Self, and coming in proximity with Nature, imbibe its quality of inertia, we suffer. Through the control of mind can be effected an isolation of Spirit from matter. Only then will our suffering cease.

Towards this end we try to meditate—not to attain psychic powers nor to control the universe, nor to force Nature to reveal its secrets to us, but simply, through the study of mind, to gain a little control over it, to be able

to gather it to a focal point, so that we may live as befits our spiritual heritage rather than as a whimpering beggar turned off the road by every messenger of fate. Thus we aspire to isolate Spirit from matter until we find how impossible it is for anyone in New York to be a real Yogi. For how can one faithfully practise the eight necessary steps? How can one discriminate regarding food? Or avoid associations? Or seek a particular environment? Neither Jnana Yoga nor Raja Yoga is suitable for a Westerner to practise, because he cannot live according to specific rules. He cannot give up family or business associates. Therefore we next try to concentrate on Karma Yoga which is likely to prove a more natural path for us.

Not at all disconcerted—for all Yogas lead to peace—we turn to Karma. This Yoga means action. Our whole life is nothing but action and reaction. Since all life is only a chain of cause and effect we should confine ourselves to such actions as will bear the fruits of peace, bliss and happiness. Our character is formed by our work alone. It is the little actions of daily life that build mighty examples of character as well as shameful types of it. We shake and fall down at the slightest tremor of adversity, because we have built a top-heavy structure of character. Work with a selfish motive dissipates energy and holds us in bondage of expectant compensation. Work done with no such motive behind purifies the mind, and helps the Self to manifest Itself. Karma Yoga insists that any task, irrespective of its dignity, should be done gracefully for its own sake. How to avoid the good or the bad

result which the effect of every action produces? To work as a witness, practising discrimination, is the reply. We find the aim of Karma Yoga is to harmonise tremendous activity of the body with absolute stillness of the mind, or tremendous activity of the mind in its soul-search with absolute stillness of the body.

But the deeper we go, the more we realise that these Yogas are based on the will power of the individual. In practising them we feel we have come to the limits of our capacities. We feel strained. We are reminded of tired children who desire only to curl up in a loving lap and go to sleep. Suddenly we find we can do just that. Sri Ramakrishna has grown, out of our Gospel reading, into the spiritual leader of the age. He has grown, for us who long ago had given up all conceptions of a personal God, into an ever present Being. For us he has become the repository of all love. It is his picture that sheds love and illumination upon us as we struggle along the different paths of Yoga. His smile gives us the courage to cultivate solitude in the midst of family and business groups. We feel ourselves at rest when we but give up all selfish desire to accomplish anything for ourselves, and when we admit our dependence upon him and surrender ourselves completely to him, body, mind and soul. He holds us in peace. With this surrender comes a newly experienced quietude of mind which gives feelings of elation too subtle for analysis. Each morning's awakening is one of gladness. Each day's work is done with surety and good will. Now everything we do is done for him. To take in money or to pay it out, to

write letters, to balance accounts, to solicit business—in fact every item of work is thought of as an act of worship. There is the picture of him before the mind's eye, and that is the pivot of all thought. Discrimination between the Real and the Unreal, isolation of Spirit and matter, work for the sake of work, liberation itself, have all become submerged desires. Let there be birth and death for us as he wills it. He is the Father in the Kingdom of Heaven within us. He is Kali, the giver of boons, through whose grace, knowledge and love and devotion will manifest themselves in us. He is the Krishna who charms us with his songs, and he is the Krishna in whose hand are the reins that curb our senses. Because he is patience, we need no parent besides him. Because he is understanding, he obliterates all other companions. Because he is knowledge, books are mere words. Because he exists within us, the lustre of his Consciousness shining through our eyes makes us see mere lumps of paste in diamonds. Because he never wears a mask while everyone else hides himself behind subtle creations designed to delude us, he is the only one in whom we have perfect trust. He has become our all in all.

To live for him is to put into practice the principles of all the Yogas. As he lives in our heart, so he must live in the hearts of all,—of relatives and co-workers and sales people and even of beggars who sit on subway steps with hand hopefully outstretched. We think "Thou too art He," and serve them as best as we can. As our mind keeps running to him, it is becoming one-pointed when we practice meditation. As all work is becom-



ing votive offerings, our purposes are all purified.

Thus has the centre of our consciousness been shifted. The remembrance of the social group of which we were once an integral part; the nervous excitement of gaiety; the book of the hour; the soft-lighted, deep-carpeted restaurants; persuasive dance music—all have become like experiences of another life bearing no relation whatever to our present existence. There has been no renunciation for any of us, in the sense attached to that word by those who would have held us bound to the pleasures of the senses. We have given up nothing. We have simply turned our attention from experiences which no

longer interest us to those which do. That the mind no longer runs after former amusements is because the disciplines of Yoga are creating so deep a channel for our aspiration to realise the Ideal as a Living Presence. All desires, therefore, tend to flow in that direction.

Now we have tasted the peace of desirelessness. Now we walk free of fear among the many who are completely paralysed by it. Now we *know* that virtue has its own reward. Were it necessary to renounce anything to attain our present state of mind, there is nothing we can think of in the gross or subtle worlds that would be too great to be given up.

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## THE INFINITE EXCELLENCES OF SRI RAMA (or RAMA GUNA MANASA)

By Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph.D.

[In the following article Dr. V. Raghavan of the Sanskrit Department of the Madras University gives a sketch of Sri Rama's character and personality. It is needless to say that for ages Sri Rama has been held before the Hindu mind the ideal of a perfect man.]

(Continued from last issue)

**I**N truth Rama, who was the Lord's incarnation as man, was the embodiment of infinite excellences,—*Ananta-Kalyaana-guna*. It is with unstaling pleasure that Valmiki describes his qualities again and again. Rama's excellences are a vast Manasa lake in which the swan-like hearts of those who are pure in spirit delight to sport. It is not as if, in some mythological past, an incarnation of God killed some demon Ravana. In our personality there are innumerable ignoble thoughts and vices, of all of

which Ravana is the symbol. Our good thoughts, pure impulses and noble inspirations are Rama. These latter should triumph over the former. It is to show this to every ordinary man that the Lord manifested Himself as man and did all these acts of goodness. It is not that He could not, with a mere knit of His brow, burn the whole of Lanka. It is to teach man and to ennoble him that God descended and lived out the ideal life. Says the Bhagavata in one of its fine appreciations of the Rama incarna-

tion : It is not for killing a demon only, but it is to teach man that God incarnated as man.<sup>14</sup>

After the accomplishment of the killing of Ravana, the gods praise Rama as God incarnate. "No," tells Rama to them, "I am a man. I am an ordinary man, Rama, son of Dasaraatha" (*Atmaanam Maanusham Manye Raamam Dasarathaatmajam* R. VI. 120:10). For his mission is to show to the ordinary man that it is possible for him to be pure, good, truthful and universally beneficial in his attitude and acts. All this should be made possible for the ordinary man, and none should think that only a superman or God's incarnation can acquire these virtues.

Descriptions of Rama's good qualities appear again and again in the Epic. Each quality ascribed to Rama is a pregnant imperative to us to be like that. Each excellence of His is a call to us to pursue the higher life. What one can note in the descriptions of Rama's qualities, even on the first reading, is the fact, how Rama combined in himself the uncombinable pairs of virtues. Every virtue has an excess and a weakness attached to it. But Rama was free from such attendant stains. If he was heroic, he was never haughty—(*Viiryavaana ca viiryena mahataa svena vismitah* R. III. 1:13). His self-control was born of strength, not of weakness. (*Niyataatma Mahaaviiryah* (R. I. 1:8.) He was critical but never cynical; he had the sense of enjoyment but was not indolent; he was good but not wretched or weak. In fine, his character can be summed up in two words, goodness and strength.

<sup>14</sup> मर्त्यवतारस्त्विह मर्त्यशिक्षणं

रक्षोवधायैव न केवलं विभो : । V. 19.5.

Rama is said to be *Vasya* or 'easy of access' in the opening canto (*Sucir vasyas samaadhimaan* I. 1:12). It is but natural that, when we, with a modicum of endowment, develop swelled head, and feel as if we were on a pedestal higher than the rest of humanity, men of greater endowment should naturally be very little accessible. Who was more endowed with virtues and abilities than Rama, but Rama was accessible. *Saulabhya*, easiness of access, marked him. The citizens say that Rama would enquire of their welfare as a father would with his children; their joy thrills him; he shares their sorrows.<sup>15</sup> For he was an Arya, a noble man in every sense of the word, and treated everybody as his equal (*Aaryas sarva samas caiva* I 1:16). His love was universal.<sup>16</sup> When Sugriva made a rash attempt at Ravana's life, and escaped from him only with some difficulty, Rama became alarmed; he was overjoyed to see his friend safe, and told him that if he were dead, he would not like his kingdom or Sita or anything. This was not a mere formal expression of love and congratulation offered by an ordinary man to a friend or a gentleman to another. It may be separation from Sita, or an accident to Lakshmana, or a danger to Sugriva. Equal on all these occasions was Rama's grief. Above all, Rama bore this same love for all,

<sup>15</sup> पौरान्स्वजनवन्नित्यं कुशलं परिपृच्छति ।

\* \* पिता पुत्रानिवौरसान् ॥

व्यसनेषु मनुष्याणां शृशं भवति दुःखितः ।

उत्सवेषु च सर्वेषु पितेव परितुष्यति ॥

Ayo. 2. 36-39.

<sup>16</sup> सर्वलोकप्रियः । I. i. 15.

जन्म रामस्य सुमहद् वीर्यं सर्वानुकूलताम् ।

I. 3.10.

from his friend and leader of the army, Sugriva, down to the unknown monkey in his army. After the battle, Vibhishana was bringing Sita in a palanquin. Naturally, the monkeys of the army which fought for the recovery of Sita, desired to have a look at her, and crowded along the path. Official Vibhishana resorted to force in order to disperse them. The sight of the panicky monkeys was too much for Rama to bear. He flared up against Vibhishana and said : "Stop from your ways ; scare not these monkeys; they are mine own." He even passed a stricture on Sita for riding in a palanquin and asked her to walk on foot through the crowd.<sup>17</sup> Mere gratitude cannot express itself in such unstilted felicity. It is absolute goodness and universal love.

Valmiki says of Rama frequently that he was of undepressed spirit (*Adeenaatmaa*). Many of us break down even if a breeze of misfortune blows our way. We become wretched at once, weep, narrate our woes to one and all, look up for compassion and sympathy and go about pitying ourselves. This is thoroughly despicable. Rama who never wore a wretched or piteous look asks us also to be like him. What greater loss can there be to most of us than the loss of a kingdom promised to us ? Rama was not only deprived of the throne, but Rama was asked also to retire to the forests. Yet there was no dejection on his face;

<sup>17</sup> उत्सर्षिमाणास्तान् दृष्ट्वा समन्ताज्जातसंभ्रमान् ।

दक्षिण्यत्तदमर्षाच्च वारयामास राघवः ॥

संख्याश्चाब्रवीद्रामः चक्षुषा प्रदहन्निव ।

विभीषणं मेहाप्राज्ञं सोपालंभमिदं वचः ॥

किमर्थं मामनादृत्य क्रियतेऽयं त्वया जनः ।

निवर्तयेयमुद्योगं जनोऽयं स्वजनो मम ॥

VI. 117. 24-26.

the colour never fell off his cheeks; his face was as benign as it always was, as charming as before like the full moon.<sup>18</sup> Rama had a permanent fund of inner joy. He never lost it. Valmiki adds : " Even as the autumnal full moon could not give up its splendour, he too did not give up its natural cheerfulness.<sup>19</sup>

This 'Harsha' or attitude of joy, he never lost. When, in the same situation, he sees Lakshmana unpoised and boisterous, Rama asks him to put down his fury and sorrow, to resort to firmness, to brush aside the feeling of humiliation for the insult offered to him and adopt the outlook of joy which alone is best.<sup>20</sup> Rama was thus a perfect Yogin. The vicissitudes of life like pleasure and pain, prosperity and calamity, affected him not. Bharata says of him : Where can I find your equal Rama, you whom neither sorrow depresses, nor pleasure overwhelms.<sup>21</sup>

The inner benevolence always imparts a glow and benign aspect to one's face. Everybody is attracted and is made to feel security, *Abhaya*,

<sup>18</sup> न चास्य महती लक्ष्मी राज्यनाशोऽपकर्षति ।

लोककान्तस्य कान्तत्वात् शीतरश्मेरिव क्षपा ॥

न घनं गन्तुकामस्य त्यजतश्च वसुन्धराम् ।

सर्वलोकातिगस्येव दृश्यते चित्तविक्रिया ॥

II. 19. 32-33.

<sup>19</sup> उचितं च महाबाहुः न जहौ हर्षमात्मनः ।

शारदः समुदीर्णाशुः चन्द्रस्तेज इवात्मजम् ॥

R. II. 19. 37.

<sup>20</sup> निगृष्ट रोषं शोकं च धैर्यमाश्रित्य केवलम् ।

अवमानं निरस्येमं गृहीत्वा हर्षमुत्तमम् ॥

II. 22. 3.

<sup>21</sup> को हि स्यादीदृशो लोके यादृशस्त्वमरिन्दम ।

न त्वां प्रव्यथयेद्दुःखं प्रीतिर्वा न प्रहर्षयेत् ॥

II. 106. 2.

in the presence of such a being. If Valmiki says of Ravana that his very name was an alarm, he says of Rama that where he was, there fear was not; no one need fear even a rebuke from Rama (*Yatra raamo bhayam na atra na asti tatra paraabhava* II 48:15) Rama never insulted others—(*Na ca avamantaa bhuutaanaam* II. 1:30). There was something in the very look of Rama that infused confidence in those who saw him. He was always in an unruffled and calm temperament. Composure and pleasing looks may come to men occasionally, but they were permanent features of Rama (*Sa ca nityam prasaantaatmaa* R II 1:10; *Sadaika-priyadarshana* R I 1:16). He was soft in demeanour, speech and gestures. Mildness marked his treatment of others. One might have done him the worst wrong but none had so much power to excuse as Rama. The crow committed an atrocity on the person of his wife, but when it fell at his feet, Rama excused it. When Vibhishana sought refuge under him, and everybody round Rama stood against taking him, Rama said that if their greatest foe, Ravana, should seek refuge, he would readily excuse him and afford him security.<sup>22</sup> This is not mere rhetorical flourish. Rama would act up to it. For Valmiki says of him—*Na smaraty apakaraanaam satam apy aatmavattuyaa* R. II. 1:11. He was capable of forgetting a thousand flaws and disservices of others. If he were not so, where is the hope of salvation and of his blessing for us? When Rama is banished, Lakshmana

is sorry and angry so much, only because he could not find any man who could attribute even a flaw to Rama; and he asks, who would abandon a son like Rama who loves even his enemies, one who is a *Ripuatsala*<sup>23</sup>? Rama was never a source of trouble to any one. Why should anybody try to get rid of him? Garuda, who came from heaven to free Rama and Lakshmana from the *Nagapasa* (serpent-noose) addresses Rama as one who is affectionate even to the foes.<sup>24</sup> Contrary to persons who, after receiving every kind of help from another, hate and wrong him for a single flaw of his, Rama searched for a single good turn in a person and satisfied himself with that (*Kathamcid upakaarena krite naikena tushyati* R. II. 1:11)<sup>24</sup>. Valmiki's words suggest that that single good turn need not be directly done or heartily done; it is enough if that act had a shred of 'good-turn-ness' about it.

It is not that Rama was not clever and intelligent. It is not that he did not know to distinguish a good man from a bad man. Valmiki calls Rama a *Virakshana*, an expert, a *Visarada*, an adept in worldly affairs (*Laukike Samayaacaare Kritakalpo visuara-dah* R 11 1:22). He was a man of keen perception and correct judgment. He never erred in his understanding of persons. When Lakshmana suspects Bharata, Rama does not. He rates men properly and at their worth. When Sugriva who was against accepting Vibhishana says that

<sup>22</sup> देवकल्पमृजुं दान्तं रिपूनामपि वत्सलम् ।

अवेक्षमाणः को धर्मे त्यजेत्पुत्रमकाराणम् ॥

II. 21. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Bhavabhuti also says: अति हि सौरे  
जन्यमार्यस्य तस्मिन्नपि निसर्गवैरिणि निशाच-  
बहुमानः । Mahaviracarita. I. Act.

<sup>22</sup> आनयैनं हरिभ्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ।

विभीषणो वा सुग्रीव यदि वा रावणः स्वयम् ॥

Yuddha. 18. 33. 1.

see also verses 26-31.

Vibhishana is a deserter of his brother and that one who deserted his own brother may desert anybody, Rama mildly, and in his own subtle and masterly manner, says that brothers are much the same everywhere, except in his own house (*Na sarve bhraataras taata bhavanti Bharatopamaah* R. VI. 18:14). Sugriva himself had risen to his present position by killing his brother. But such correct and thorough understanding of men and things is apt to make us, ordinary men, cynical and sour with a biting tongue which has a sting at everybody. But experience and knowledge did not render Rama sceptic. He understood people thoroughly, but he sympathised with them and did not lose his innate goodness of nature. He continued to be a Sadhu even after seeing persons through. (*Loke purusha-saarajnah saadhur eko vinirmitah* II 1:18).

The power of speech given to man is both a blessing and a curse. For that matter, which power given to him as a blessing is not turned by him into a curse? But the spoken word is specially mentioned as it is the easiest tool which can help or harm. Rama gives us his hints regarding the best use of speech. First of all, Rama never indulged in idle talk or in gossiping or in casting aspersions on people (*Na viruddhakathaarucih* R II 1:17). He never spoke vulgarly or wickedly or in any other bad manner. We usually find highly placed persons, haughty men, and old friends who have become prosperous, adopting silence till the other meekly talks to them. This seems to mean prestige. Rama stood on no such prestige. He

talked first (*Purvabhaashi*; *mridu purvam ca bhaashate* R. II. 1:10, 13). He talked politely and sweetly (*Mridu bhashate*; *Priyavaadi*; *Priyamvadah* II 1:13) but never at the cost of truth; for he was a *Satyavak*. He never went back on his word (*Ramo dvir na abhibhaashate* II. 18:30). He always spoke with a smile *Smita purvabhibhaashii cha* II. 2:40. The smile was the index of the grace that filled his heart.<sup>25</sup> In argument, he usually defeated his opponents, as in the case of Vasishtha, Jabali and others. A whole town he quietly turned back, sticking to his own resolve. How he tackled his mother, who stood against his going to the forest, and the impassionate Lakshmana every now and then! Hence it is that Valmiki said of Rama: *Uttarottara-yuktau ca vaktava vaacaspatir yathaa* R II 1:17. For Rama was infinitely learned, had strong memory and what is more, fine imagination and a gift of speech (*Sarva saastrarthatatvajnah smritiman pratibhanavan* I 1:15). And as in doing, so in speaking, he knew the proper time and place. (*Desakaalavit* R II 1:18).

Rama was not addicted to any bad objects of desire and was never doggedly sticking to bad things (*Na asreyasi ratah* II. 1:17 *Na asadgrahi* II 1:24). He no doubt enjoyed life, but was never indolent, nor did he in this enjoyment infringe on Dharma (*Artha dharmau ca samgrihya sukha-tantro na ca alasah* II 1:27). There are moral and good persons who think that they must not only shut themselves up, but must be kill-joys also. How are the two, virtuousness and enjoyment, contradictory? Rama was a great lover of, and expert in, music (*Gaandharve ca*

<sup>25</sup> The Adhyatma Ramayana says :  
अनुपमहाख्यहृत्स्थेन्दुसूचकस्मितचन्द्रिकः ।

*bhuvī sreshthah* II 2:34). He trained himself in all games and cultivated all the fine arts and crafts which help a man to spend the leisure hours in chastened pleasure (*Vaihaarikaanaam silpaanaam vijnataa; aarohe vinaye caiva yukto vaarana-vaajinaam; dhanurveda vidaam sreshthah* II. 28:29). He insulted not anybody; never left things or himself to drift along the current of Time. *Na ca Kaalavasaaanugah* II 1:30). Youngsters now-a-days suffer from a premature sense of self-sufficiency in knowledge; but though a man of knowledge, Rama still sought the company of elders, and at intervals of work, sat discussing and learning in the company of those who are venerable by character, knowledge and age.<sup>26</sup> Why should their experience be lost? He gave infinitely but never received. When devoted Guha offers him something he says (*Na hi varte pratigrahe* R 50:42), "I am not an observer of the policy of 'receiving'." Sita says of Rama: "He would give, but never receive or receive back" (*Dadyaat na pratigrihniyat* V. 33:25). He was not a caste-rebel, though he was infinitely superior to the Kshatriyas of his own caste and to even Brahmanas: (*Kulocitamatiḥ kṣhatram dharmam svam bahu manyate* II. 1:16) He had love and respect to the class in which he was born and brought name and fame to it by becoming its finest flower.

At the root of all the goodness of Rama was 'sympathy' and 'sensitive-ness'. He strove that he might lead a blemishless life and leave an un-

tainted name. Such fame, he esteemed as heaven (*Manyate parayaa Kiirt-yaa mahat svargaphalam tatah* II 1:16). His anxiety was that there should not be even a speck of dust in him. Not a single being in the world should have anything to say against him. This he worked for and persued as his ideal for a king, the greatest of the servants of the people. Lakshmana said that the tragedy of his banishment was that there was nothing against him to warrant that act and that there would be none in the entire kingdom to say a word against him. Even an enemy had nothing to say ill of him, even in his absence.<sup>27</sup> Dasaratha tells Kaikeyi: "Ill-natured or slanderous talk is unthinkable in Rama (*Parivaadh apavaado va raghave no'papalyati* II. 12:25). Rama sought to please all and earn a universal good name. If Kaikeyi wanted the kingdom, he gave up; and before entering the city after the exile, he was still as desireless of the kingdom as before and sent Hanuman to see how Bharata was. If Bharata had meantime acquired a liking for the throne, Rama would retire again. Rama looked upon the public as God, and propitiated them in every way. He practised the religion of *Loka-aradhana*. Bhavabhuti makes him say that he would give up Sita even if that was necessary to please and propitiate the world.<sup>28</sup> Rama did this also and perfected his yoga

<sup>27</sup> न तं पश्याम्यहं लोके परोक्षमपि यो नरः ।

स्वमित्रोऽपि निरस्तोऽपि योऽस्य दोषमुदाहरेत् ॥

II. 21. 5.

<sup>26</sup> शीलवृद्धेर्ज्ञानवृद्धेर्वयोवृद्धेश्च सज्जनैः ।

कथयन्नास्त वै नित्यं अल्लयोग्यान्तरेष्वपि ॥

II. i. 12.

<sup>28</sup> स्नेहं दयां च सौख्यं च यदि वा जानकीमपि ।

आराधनाय लोकस्य मुञ्चतो नास्ति मे व्यथा ॥

Uttaramama Charita I.

of *Loka-aaradhana* or *Loka Upaasana*. That Rama practised kingship as an *Upasana* or worship, Valmiki says in the prefatory synopsis (*Ramo rajyam upasitvaa brahmalokam gamishyati* I 1:19). Once again, the Bhagavata,

which unerringly finds the essence of the Ramayana, says in its description of Rama that he was one who had worshipped the world. (*Upaasita-lokah*).

“ओं नमो भगवते उत्तमश्लोकाय नम आर्यलक्षणशीलव्रताय नम उपशिक्षितात्मन उपासितलोकाय नमः साधुवादनिकषणाय नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय महापुरुषाय महाराजाय नम इति ।”

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## RECOGNITION

By Prof. Ernest P. Horowitz

[Prof. Horowitz of the Hunter's College, New York, sheds much light on some conceptions of Indian literature and philosophy in this short article.]

**H** INDUISM even more than Hellenism is exalted and illumined by a bold vision of the Boundless, encompassing the finite. Man's inbred limitations shut out the full realisation of the Infinite ; the impersonal Deity necessarily materialises to a personal God. Advaitins alone expand individual consciousness to universal sympathies. They tear the veil of Maya, until all cosmic appearances, even the personal gods, dissolve into the unqualified Brahman. Ramakrishna 'recognised' the one impersonal Self (Siva) throughout humanity (Kali) ; the Divine Mother and God Woman ever gives birth to the travailing creation. Ramakrishna resigned his will to the productive force (Sakti) of the prolific Mother, the matrix of the universe, the womb of fugitive life ; She is eternally mated to God-Father Siva, and ever manifest in man. The spiritual philosophy of recognition (*prdtiabhigna*) has been cultivated in Kashi even more than in Bengal. The finest play, ever penned in

Asia, is a poetic propaganda for recognition. The author of *Abhijnana-sakuntalam* was a young Kashmiri, full-faced and tender-eyed, his big violin-soul richly attuned to the swelling rhythm of God's universe even as Ariosto and Goethe were. Kalidasa was a fervent fire-devotee like his imperial patron. For some unknown act of indiscretion the Maharaja of Kashmir banished the sweet *minstrel-mage* who made the northward drifting clouds his pleading ambassador (*meghaduta*) to the heart of his beloved, his young and beautiful wife who was left in her lonesome cottage amid the lotus gardens of lovely Kashmir. The *Sakuntala* romance is located in a secluded hermitage in the fairy woods of the Kashmir Paradise, where sun-devotees chant the Surya-hymn. Union preceded abandonment, but recognition re-united the royal pair, and led to self-realisation (*Atma-bodhi*). *Sivena gamyatam!* Creation and destruction, meeting and parting, are bed-fellows like light and shade. Mother Nature plays a while with us,

until we are tired to death, whereafter we wake up, to resume our Karmic game, and gambol. Those who recognise the divine Playmate and dread charmer everywhere, though disguised in a thousand forms, are in close touch and mystic communion with all living organisms; they share the thrilling joys and agonising woes of the fugitive world, and are mated to Siva. Chosen Saivas readily renounce world-detached contemplation for so-service and welfare work; they act as the only free agents among a crowd of abject slaves. The narrow concept of self-salvation (*Atmano moksha*) enslaves the best of us. Princes and peasants, Pundits and priests, soldiers and salesmen, 99 per cent of mankind, however religious, remain Hinayanists, sailing on the safe boat of self-sufficiency and perfectly contented. But Recognitionists float on the big raft of universal salvation to Nirvana's tranquil shores, and are ever ready to return for the benefit of mankind, *jagaddhitaya!* Ramakrishna, the godman of Bengal, is such a *Kali-das* or servant to humanity. Another towering spirit hero (*Rishi*) who constantly talked of 'things divine' (*delle cose divine*) is Master Eckhart, the blessed Advaitin of Medieval Germany. God absorbed his very self, until the sage submerged and lost himself in the surging sea of suffering humanity. In Himalaya's lone wilds I was privileged to meet a self-abandoned Acharya who shunned the luring limelight of publicity, and chose the more tempting and soul-satisfying obscurity. All things in the

vanity fair of life moved him to tears and laughter, and to loving sacrifice; he was an ardent Recognitionist, a *Hansa* of holiness, a chosen Saiva.

By the light of Siva, struggling souls climb the highest peaks of Advaita. They are apt to be ignored and forgotten in Kali Yuga, the iron age of physical force and subtle mechanisation. Money-mad materialism may produce temporary derangements but spiritual culture never dies; it merely changes hands in Mother Maya's merry game, and is renewed time and again, reborn from *Kalpa* to *Kalpa*. A few far-sighted, keen-visioned eagle-souls detect already the first glimmer of a new dawn on the Nordic horizon, shining yet faintly and hardly noticed by the topsy-turvy busy and buzzing multitude, which is as eager as ever for its full share of *Kama-Kanchana*. After the long Arctic night, the aurora borealis appears; the Deva-luminaries re-ascend with a revised *Advaita* version, the modernised message of Siva. To-day the two most troublesome, yet most dynamic countries are *Russia* and the *Reich*. The former boldly rejects the frigid and rigid formalism of a decaying church which is capitalistic rather than socialistic, while Nazi Germany studies Master Eckhart and is deeply imbued with the heroic side of the Bhagavad Gita. It was the Kshatriyas, and not the Brahmins, who championed the heroic life and fearless fight, ever since the revolutionary days of the defiant Upanishads.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Sri Ramakrishna and Modern Psychology :** By Swami Akhilananda. Published by the Vedanta Society, 224, Angell Street, Providence, R. I., U.S.A.

This booklet of 31 pages by Swami Akhilananda, the Head of the Vedanta Society of Providence, breaks new ground in so far as it seeks to show how, in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's life, an impartial mind will find no point in the criticisms advanced by modern psychology in repudiation of the mystic's claim to have realised certain higher values of life inaccessible at the level of the senses or to the methods of science. The importance of this well-written book is therefore quite out of all proportion to its size. Besides enlightening the general reader on the subject, the book ought to draw the attention of the followers of Sri Ramakrishna to undertake a major work on this aspect of the great Master's life. For to-day whatever serious scientific criticism of mystic experience there is, comes from the side of Psychology, and if a scientific study of Sri Ramakrishna's life can disarm such criticism, it will indeed be a great gain to the intelligent section of humanity.

**The Geeta :** Translated from the original by Sri Purohit swami. Published by Faber and Faber Ltd., 24, Russel Square, London, W.C. 1. Pages 110. Price 21sh. net.

53

The book contains the English translation of the Bhagavad Gita, without either text or notes. But with this bare translation the author has achieved a measure of success in conveying the spirit of the Gita to the English reader innocent of Indian philosophical technicalities which many an elaborate annotated edition with all the learning displayed in it, fails to do. In his Preface to the book, His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda makes the following brief but significant estimate of the Bhagavad Gita: "It is, perhaps, however, unique among sacred books in that it deals not only with

man's spiritual and moral difficulties but with those that are intellectual. Generations have found its intellectual unification of experience the framework wherein they can fit the observations and discoveries of their lives. It satisfies the whole man." Such a book deserves to be read by all men, and Purohit Swami's present translation of this great scripture into idiomatic and very readable English conveying the spirit of the original, will be found valuable by all Western readers. We say Western readers, because in a poor country like India book lovers may find it difficult to pay such a high price as 21sh.,—a price which it no doubt deserves considering the highly artistic quality of its printing and get up. Provided one can afford to purchase it, one will find this aristocratic edition of the Gita very valuable in enriching one's mind as well as in decorating one's book shelf.

**The Complete works of H. P. Blavatsky :** Vols I and II combined and Vol. IV. Edited by A. Trevor Barker. Published by Messrs. Rider & Co., 34, Paternoster Row, London. Pages over 1,400 in book One, and 366 in book Two. Price 15 sh. for each volume.

Of these two volumes under review the first one is an exact photographic facsimile of Mrs. Blavatsky's famous work, 'Isis Unveiled'. Besides the vast number of articles included in the books appearing under this name, it contains also two other articles of Blavatsky.—*Theories of re-incarnation* and *My Book*. The volume four, the second of the books reviewed, consists of a number of her miscellaneous writings that appeared from time to time in the *Theosophist*. Both the volumes contain very exhaustive indices.

To make a proper estimate of the subject matter and value of these writings is beset with great difficulties. In a general way the subjects dealt with in these volumes may be described as oriental philosophy, magic, occultism and science. In fact the first impression that a reader would have

on opening these sumptuous volumes and turning over their pages is one of bewilderment—a sort of stupifaction at the unimaginably vast range of information that the author has on the beliefs and practices of peoples, both ancient and modern, on the topics mentioned before. The reader would also feel that the author is hostile to dogmatic Christianity of the Churches and its claims, has a distinct admiration for the ideals and philosophies of the East, and believes in the possibility of harmonising religion and occultism with modern science. Above all he would be impressed that the writer of these books is one of the unique personalities of our age, and would be filled with admiration for her, irrespective of whether he agrees or not with the general outlook and bent of mind represented in these volumes.

While researchers in occultism and the scholarly followers of Madam Blavatsky would find all their expectations fulfilled by the present edition, we should say that a general reader would have felt very thankful to the Editor if he had given a detailed Introduction stating the general principles and the philosophy of life for which the author stood, and in elucidation of which she must have produced all the apparently loose and disconnected pieces of writing incorporated in these volumes.

**The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected :** *By J. B. Horner, Associate and Librarian of Newnham College, Cambridge*  
*Published by Williams and Norgate, London, 1936. Pp. 328. Price 12sh. 6d.*

This well-documented book traces the evolution of the Buddhist ideal of human perfection—the Arahant. The debt Buddhism owes to its precursors, the concept of the Arahant as Buddha taught it separated from the non-Buddhist element in the canonical books, the changes it underwent with the lapse of time and the spread of Buddhism to other countries, the creeping in of elements alien to the original dynamic concept—these constitute the main theme; but more is given than is promised. The training necessary for the attainment of perfection and the monastic ideal are dealt with in some detail. The

changes undergone by words like Dhamma, Bhikkhu, Asava and Nibbana are pointed out, and there are interesting speculations suggested by some of the synonyms of Arahant. These will throw valuable light on collateral problems not touched on in this book. The book, indeed, reveals a mind steeped in the literature of Buddhism. The epilogue testifying to the spirit of religious toleration in India comes in with grace. The table of Pali literature and the general index of Pali words enhance the value of the book.

**The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct, Vol. II: By Prof. Rangacharya, M.A. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., George Town, Madras. Price Rs. 5. Pp. 463.**

'The Hindu Philosophy of Conduct' is the class-lectures on the Bhagavad Gita delivered by the well-known Sanskrit scholar of Madras, the late Prof. M. Rangacharya, M.A. All those who have had the occasion to look into the first volume of these lectures would be glad to have the second volume after so many years of delay which might have led many to think that the subsequent volumes of the lectures are never going to see the light of day. Like the first volume, this one too contains the text of the Gita, translation in English and the lectures elaborately expounding the meaning of each verse.

Although the Bhagavad Gita is one of the most popular of Indian scriptures, it is one of the most difficult books to master. The ancient commentaries are bristling with technicalities which a lay reader of to-day may often find rather elusive and intricate. To such, Prof. Rangacharya's exposition may be safely recommended for study. For while being elaborate enough to bring out the full significance of the verses, it expatiates lucidly on their ethical and philosophical significance without giving them any sectarian orientation, or introducing metaphysical technicalities with which only specialists are expected to be familiar. The most refreshing feature of the book is that Prof. Rangacharya's attempt is not to show that the Gita supports this system of philosophy or that, but to impart to the reader

a thorough understanding of the text with all its implications.

The present volume contains Chapter VII to Chapter XII of the Bhagavad Gita. The third volume which is under preparation would deal with the rest of the Gita.

**Sadhana Samgit (Bangali) :** *Compiled by Swami Apurvananda. Published by Swami Abhayananda, Belur Math, P.O., Howrah. Price Rs. 2-8.*

This beautifully printed and sumptuously bound volume of 250 pages, published as a memorial volume at the cente-

nary of Sri Ramakrishna, consists of 101 soul-thrilling Bengali songs with their proper musical notations graphically represented, with the help of which one could easily learn them. Of these 101 songs, fifty are known to have been sung by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The views on music which Swami Vivekananda held are also collected and presented in the form of a preface in the beginning. Since there are some of the most valuable Ragas and Raginis represented with their pure and simple modifications and the important *talams* with their 'codes' (Teka), the work is pre-eminently useful for beginners.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Swami Kalyanananda passes away

Swami Kalyanananda, Founder - Secretary of the Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Kankhal (Saharanpur Dt.), entered Mahasamadhi at 11 p.m., on the 20th instant at the age of 62. He was a disciple of the great Swami Vivekananda and was one of the pioneers of the Mission's philanthropic activities. He hailed from the district of Barisal, his original name being Dakshina Ranjan Guha. Through his indefatigable labours was created in 1901 the Sevashrama or Home of Service at Kankhal, which he nursed to its present dimensions with singular devotion. In 1899-1900 he had organised a famine relief work at Kishengarh in Rajputana, and in 1905 he took part in the landslip relief work at Dharamsala in the Punjab. Of late the Swami had been suffering from diabetes and other ailments, and went last summer for a change to Mussooree, where the catastrophe occurred. His body was taken for its last rites to Kankhal. The sudden passing away of the Swami removes one of the most prominent figures of the Ramakrishna Mission.

### R. K. Math and Mission Charitable Dispensary, Bhubaneswar

Beside an account of the working of the charitable dispensary, the present Report for the year 1935-36 gives a general

account of the history and working of the Math at Bhubaneswar. The Ashram conducts daily service in the shrine. It celebrates the important Utsavs, and especially last year organised celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary in several parts of Orissa. It is a training centre for monastic members, and besides giving them facilities for a life of meditation, has also arrangements for teaching them Nyaya and Vedanta and Sanskrit grammar. It runs a free primary school, provides many poor boys with their necessities besides what are wanted at school, and helps some to prosecute their studies in M. E. and High Schools.

The charitable dispensary gives medical relief to all irrespective of caste, colour and creed. The average daily attendance was 92 in 1935 and 97 in 1936. In addition to medicines, poor patients are supplied with diet, cloth, warm clothing and pecuniary help. In special and urgent cases the patients are visited in their homes. The income of the dispensary for the past two years was Rs. 1,286-10-0, and the total expenditure was Rs. 789-6-3. The dispensary is at present in need of better accommodation, which could be had by some extensions and alterations at a cost of Rs. 4,000. Contributions towards this or any of the other activities of the Math may be sent to Swami Nirvanananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, P. O. Bhubaneswar, Puri Dt.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—*Swami Vivekananda*

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## HINDU ETHICS

ऋषींश्च देवांश्च महातुरांश्च त्रैविद्यांश्च वने मुनींश्च ।  
का नापदो नोपनमन्ति लोके परावर्ज्जास्तु न संभ्रमन्ति ॥  
न पण्डितः क्रुध्यति नाभिषज्यते न चापि संसीदति न ग्रह्यति ।  
न चार्थकृद्ब्रूव्यसनेषु शोचते स्थितः प्रकृत्या हिमवानिवाचलः ॥  
यमर्थसिद्धिः परमा न हर्षयेत् तथैव काले व्यसनं न मोहयेत् ।  
सुखं च दुःखं च तथैव मध्यमं निषेवते यः स धुरन्धरो नरः ॥  
यां यामवस्थां पुरुषोऽधिगच्छेत् तस्यां रमेतापरितप्यमानः ।  
एवं प्रवृद्धं प्रणुदन् मनोजं संतापमायासकरं शरीरात् ॥  
प्राज्ञस्य कर्माणि दुरन्वयानि न वै प्राज्ञो मुह्यति मोहकाले ।  
स्थानाच्च च्युतश्चेन्न मुमोह गौतमस्तावत् कृच्छ्रमापदं प्राप्य वृद्धः ॥

Sages, gods, powerful titans, persons versed in scriptures, ascetics resorting to forests—all are victims of misfortune in this world ; but those who have known God and Nature are not confused. Men of understanding who are by nature firm and unmovable like the Himalayas, are not given to anger, attachment, dejection and exultation. Even when overwhelmed by great calamities they are not sad. He indeed is a man of mettle whom a booming success cannot gladden and a devastating calamity cannot confound,—he who takes with equanimity happiness and misery, and that which is in the middle of both. A man should always be glad and unagitated, into whatever condition he may fall ; and in this way he should chase away from his mind the vexatious burning sorrow that assaults his mind. The actions of a wise man are not easily construed. At the time of adversity a man of wisdom is unruffled. In spite of so great a fall from his exalted position and in spite of being exposed to dire difficulties, Goutama in his old age was not a bit moved.

Mahabharata, Chapter 233, verses 15-18 & 20,

## REASON AND REVELATION

[The conflict between the claims of reason and revelation, and the way of reconciling these claims, form the subject matter of this essay.]

### I

**T**HERE is perhaps scarcely a religious-minded man in the modern world who has not at one time or another felt the conflict between the claims that reason and revelation urge on his allegiance. A person whose interest in religion is purely academic may very well afford to weigh the arguments on both the sides and in the end suspend his judgment, but one for whom religion is a matter of vital importance will feel the urgent necessity of arriving at a settled conclusion on the question. A man who is hasty in his iconoclastic zeal would no doubt find an easy way out of the difficulty by unceremoniously discarding the claims of revelation and exalting reason as the only criterion that any sensible person should care for in arriving at conclusions in any matter.

But there are many facts which men of spiritual inclination consider to be sufficient justification for not adopting such a summary procedure. In the first place these revelations, by which we mean the great scriptures, were the utterances of some of the greatest and most deeply spiritual men of the world, who themselves claim to have received them directly from the Supreme Being Himself. In the next place they have been the main strength of all the great religions of the world, it being an undisputable historical fact that no religion without a revealed scripture has been able

to gain a permanent place in the world. In fact the scripture has always been the rallying point for the great religions, the main centre from which their spiritual and social influences have radiated and uplifted humanity from a state of primitive barbarism to a very high level of mental and moral refinement. To-day several sections of these scriptures may not be very appealing to most of us, but it cannot be gainsaid that there are portions of them which breathe the radiance of living truth and reveal a power to stir us to the very depths of our being. Under such circumstances how can one set them aside lightheartedly only because certain individual preferences, however strong their hold might be, make us discontented with them.

And what is the nature of reason, in preference to which we are to discard the authority of the great scriptures? Its findings, in the first place, are always inconclusive. For it has to work on the data gleaned by our senses, and this varies according to the power of observation we develop. For example, to-day science has placed in the hands of man various new methods which have vastly increased his powers of observation. Working upon the data thus collected, the human intellect would be led to certain conclusions which it could never have arrived at in the past. So also in the future man may come to be acquainted with facts unknown to him at present, and

on the basis of them he may build theories quite different from those of the present, rendering the latter antiquated and unconvincing. No doubt man can very well suspend judgment on questions relating to the details of Nature's workings or regarding the nature of common things that enter into his every-day life. He can, therefore, very well afford to leave to the scientists to give their pronouncements on such matters on the basis of their shifting data, and postpone arriving at a final conviction about them to an indefinite future. But when issues relating to the fundamentals of life are concerned, one cannot suspend one's decision in this way. For example, when one's country is attacked by another country, it would not do for one to investigate the causes that led to the conflict, or institute an impartial enquiry to ascertain on which side justice lies. The immediate duty of every one under such circumstances is to come to a decision at once and adopt every measure available for the defence of one's country. So too a person cannot afford to have no conviction regarding the ultimate nature of the universe, his own place in it, and the significance of human life. From the very nature of the rational process which has to work on the shifting data of science, we find it can give no conclusion valid for all time, and hence if we are at all to base our life on a well-formulated philosophy, on a settled conviction regarding the ultimate nature of things, we are to depend on some other criterion than the unaided rational power of man. And this other criterion of a more reliable nature men have found in revelations or scriptures, which they believe to have been received from the Deity Himself through the

mediumship of some of the great individuals of their species.

## II

In order to elucidate all the difficulties involved in the problem, we shall now consider why, in spite of all this, man is dissatisfied with scriptural authority, and feels inclined to question their sanctity. In the first place scriptures often defeat their own purpose. If the scriptures have come from the Divinity Himself for the purpose of enlightening man on most questions regarding the ultimate nature of things, then the obscure language in which they are often clothed, and the dubiousness of the meanings that scriptural passages convey, practically nullify the good intentions behind the revelations. See, for example, how different theologians have interpreted one and the same scripture in different ways, and shown that it conveys meanings of quite a divergent nature. In our own country the Vedas, which are considered to be revelation *par excellence*, have been interpreted by different Acharyas so as to yield entirely dissimilar philosophies. The same is the case with the Bible round which innumerable Christian sects have grown up. The Buddhist and Moslem scriptures too have not in any way fared better in this respect. What appears from this universal phenomenon of diversity of interpretations in the case of scriptures, is that there is a great deal of obscurity in the language and sense of these sacred writings, which goes to defeat their prime purpose of conveying certainty to the minds of men.

A way out of the difficulty has however been found by the Roman Catholic Church. For the Catholic Church maintains that a revealed book is not

in itself sufficient owing to this difficulty arising from the problem of interpretation mentioned above. We therefore require also an infallible authority for the interpretation of these scripture if man is to have undisputed information regarding Divine truths. It is contented that such an authority has been provided in the Catholic Church which has been divinely commissioned by the founder of Christianity to be the infallible interpreter of the scripture.

Now inspite of the apparent cogency of this view, it does not in any way solve the difficulty. For wherefrom does the Church derive its infallibility? From the sayings of the founder recorded in the scripture. And who is to interpret those sayings as implying the infallibility of the Church? Evidently the Church itself. Then it becomes just like a person judging the justice of his own case; his decision may carry conviction to himself and his partisans, but not to others. And in fact this is precisely what happened with regard to the claim of the Catholic Church. Men disputed the meaning put upon the particular passages by that Church, and asserted the liberty of the individual to study and understand the scripture. This was the basic spiritual principle involved in the great Protestant movement. Besides this, nobody who has studied the history of the Catholic Church would agree that it has always judged and acted in the right manner. Apart from all other things, the attitude it adopted towards scientists like Galileo cannot but fill an impartial mind with misgivings regarding its claims to infallibility. In fact how would people admit the infallibility of any institution composed of men like themselves, with all the

defects that human beings are likely to have?

Having thus disposed off the case for scripture interpreted by a so-called infallible institution, let us consider the other points in regard to which scriptural authority is found unsatisfactory by many people. In most of the scriptures we find two main sets of ideas,—one set that is not connected with physical life, and another set that impinges upon topics forming the subject-matter of science. Now the modern study of matter, life and human society has brought into light so many facts that go against the scriptural notions relating to these latter topics. Many are therefore disposed to think how they could rely even on the other set of facts mentioned in those books, namely, those relating to non-physical or spiritual life, when they find them blundering so awfully in regard to the facts of life in Nature.

Then again it is often pointed out by critics of the scriptures—and often the exclusive partisans of particular scriptures aid them substantially by their hostility towards other religions—that the sacred books of different religions, claiming themselves to be divinely inspired, contradict each other in several of their important teachings. Whether the scriptures of the world do actually contradict in this way or not is another matter, but it is an undoubted fact that many of their followers behave as if they did so, and this is sufficient excuse for even a well-intentioned person, genuinely aspiring after higher truth, to feel suspicious about scriptures as a whole.

Another point on which a legitimate complaint is felt in regard to scriptures is that they very often become,

in course of time, the rallying point for all the conservative elements in a society — a veritable citadel for all vested interests to carry on their crusades, against all agencies working for the improvement of man's life in this world in the light of the new knowledge that is being acquired by the advancing study of Nature. To add to the discontent resulting from this, in several religions the scriptures are so various and so wide in their scope that they embrace the whole of man's life, individual and social, and lay down meticulous rules, all of which, if observed, will atrophy life. Many a well-intentioned seeker of truth therefore feels that whatever might have been the utility of several of these injunctions and prohibitions in some distant past, they are a source of evil at the present day. In other words there is a general feeling that the influence of scriptures has been a dead-weight on human society.

We have mentioned above many of those misgivings which even people with genuine spiritual inclinations have about revealed scriptures. There are others who criticise and cavail at them from a purely destructive point of view. There is, of course, no use in bestowing any attention on such an attitude, but it is well worthwhile to consider those difficulties which genuine aspirants feel in regard to scriptures.

### III

From the foregoing discussion it becomes clear that no extreme, uncompromising claim, either on behalf of reason or revelation, can be satisfactory to a person in quest of spiritual certainty. To denounce reason as misleading and to exclude it from life is impossible. For understanding

is the true eye of the human personality, and even scripture becomes meaningful in its light alone. It is this irrepressible power of understanding that asserts itself as scriptural interpretation, even in the case of those who stand uncompromisingly for the authority of scriptures. Only they would smuggle the contributions of reason into their lives but not admit their claims directly. So also, however useful purely rational methods may be in gaining a correct knowledge of the relative truths of life, they can give us no settled conviction on the ultimate nature and function of existence. To be of real help to man, rational and scientific methods must work in co-operation with the scripture.

What exactly should be our conception of scripture if it should become compatible with reason? It is impossible for any modern mind to conceive that any scripture of the world was once dictated verbatim by an extra-cosmic personal God, and some privileged human beings took it down for the good of posterity. It would be a much more understandable conception of scripture to hold that it is the result of 'inspiration' than of 'expiration.' Certain men of exceptional mental qualifications were able to gain higher levels of consciousness while still remaining in the body, and this brought them face to face with the facts and laws relating to the super-physical life and relations of the embodied being. They came to arrive at settled convictions—not by the groping processes of the intellect but by actual experience having a flesh-and-blood reality about it—that man is more than the body, and that the personality of man and the universe as a whole have a spiritual back-



ground. Such realisations of theirs regarding the ultimate verities of life were embodied in the language, thought and cultural concepts of the societies in which they flourished. The exceptional personality of these seers and the great importance of their inspired sayings for the cultural life of the society gradually brought the allegiance of very large number of men to their utterances. Thus they became the scriptures of the various religions, occupying the position of highest authority in almost all matters of individual and social life.

A conception of this kind regarding revealed scriptures shows that every scripture has two aspects. In the first place the central core of its contents bears the impress of a higher inspiration, but when it comes down to the intellectual level of man, it has necessarily to do so only after it is clothed in the social and cultural heritage of the race. In other words a scripture is both divine and human—divine because it is an expression of the experience of a soul in direct contact with the Divinity, and human because it is conveyed always through human mediums. It is no doubt difficult for one to draw exactly the line that separates both these aspects of a scripture, but no impartial student of any of the world's scriptures will deny its existence. For though these aspects are indistinguishable at the parting line, they become more and more patent as they diverge from that line, revealing their respective characteristics—the one its sublime inspirational quality, and the other its evident origin in the scientific, social, legal, and political ideas of the times and societies in which the scripture was produced.

If one is prepared to accept this analysis of the structure of a scrip-

ture, the conflict between reason and revelation ceases to be as formidable as it looked at first. The inspirational core of a scripture alone is true revelation. It relates to the eternal in man. In spite of whatever crudity we may notice in the scientific and social ideas reflected in a scripture, the validity of this essential portion of it is not affected in any way. Our scientific ideas of to-day are more advanced because we have developed a better scientific technique—better instruments and methods of observation. The ancients who produced the scriptures lacked these instruments, as they are essentially the result of a continuous progress of the material resources of man. But to gain an understanding of the nature of man and his place in the universe, such external instruments and techniques are not necessary. That understanding is gained by inner culture, and the discipline and control of the mind are its only method. The ancients had as much command over this method as moderns—perhaps more, as the artificial conditions of modern life had not done havoc with many a primitive virtue of the mind. Hence it is quite conceivable that they gained glimpses of this higher knowledge, in spite of their backwardness in material sciences.

But the higher experiences embodied in the scriptures are in no way the exclusive privilege of one or more individuals in the past, and a sealed book to the moderns. In the higher spheres of existence they are on a par with what we call the data in science. They are therefore open to any one who would undergo the required discipline.

What is the function of reason in this conception of scripture? In the

first place it will be the legitimate function of reason to view the scriptures critically and distinguish their purely temporal aspect—the primitive science and social and political ideas contained in them. In doing this reason would also be indirectly dealing with the inspirational content too, for to distinguish it from the other means that. In this difficult task reason will have to determine what genuine inspiration is, by assuring that what passes for the latter does not contradict reason. For true inspiration is only a higher development of man's powers of knowing in regard to the subtler fields of existence, and should not therefore contradict reason. Thus

inspiration supplements reason, not supplants it.

There is also another function which comes within the legitimate sphere of reason. It is necessary to co-ordinate the different ideas of the men of inspiration and also to correlate them as a whole with the rest of human knowledge. Further the inspirational content of the different religions—the product of societies and cultures of diverse kinds—have to be examined and harmonised. Here reason has ample scope for operation. A great philosophy of religion will be the result of the reason of man working in harmony with inspiration in these respects.

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## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments, and respected and worshipped like a veritable goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**A**FTER a few months I was sent to Ghatal, not very far from Jayrambati, to give relief to the flood-stricken people of that place. I took leave for three days and visited the Holy Mother on the occasion of the Jagaddhatri Puja. Atul was with me. This was his first visit to the Mother. We went to Jayrambati through Kamarpukur and as soon as we reached her home, Ashu Maharaj, an attendant of the Holy Mother, said, "It is nice that you have come. The Mother has been sad because of not seeing any devotee for some time past." The Mother

asked us to stay for meal and fed us with a large quantity of fish. Early next morning, we had to return to the relief work. While taking leave of the Mother, I said to her, "I shall come again." Atul said, like a school boy, "Please remember."

After finishing the relief work at Ghatal, I again returned to Jayrambati. It was winter. On reaching the house of the Holy Mother in the evening, I found her seated on the porch applying medicine to her leg. She was suffering from rheumatic pains in her knees.

Disciple: What is this medicine?

Mother: Someone suggested this leaf. Have you been starving for the whole day?

Disciple: No, but I have not taken any food on the way.

Mother: Why did you not buy some refreshments? There are stores on the way.

I had only a rupee with me and had saved it to pay my expenses at Belur Math. However, I did not tell her about it. She served me with a hot meal which I ate heartily. "He who has created the world," said she, "will look after it. You don't have to worry." After I had finished the meal, she said, "Our Master will do much work through you. You have done much good to so many people of Ghatal. You have given them food and clothing. When your work is over, He will take you, His cherished treasure, back to His arms."

Disciple: Why do I not get a vision of the Master?

Mother: You will certainly see Him. You will see Him when the proper time arrives. Lalit (Chatterjee) never once asked me, "Why do I not see the Master?" His attitude was that Sri Ramakrishna was his very own. He would certainly get the vision of Him some time or other.

Disciple: Please bless me that all may go well with me and that I may get pure love for God, a love that seeks no earthly return.

Mother: You will certainly get it. Yes, you will have pure love for God.

She gave me a blanket and asked me to use it during the night. I asked her, "Whose is this blanket?" "It is mine," said she, "I use it myself."

Two days after, the Mother was seated on the porch of her house at about nine-o'clock in the morning preparing betel-leaf. She gave me

puffed rice to eat and afterwards we were engaged in a conversation.

Disciple: Mother, please don't keep me, this time, on this earth for a long time.

Mother: If you don't like it, you will return with me. After giving up their bodies, all the devotees will certainly go to the Master.

Disciple: Please do not forget it.

Mother: Let me assure you that at the time of death I will accompany you to the Master.

Disciple: Please take me away this time from this world. When Sri Ramakrishna is born again, I shall come back with Him.

Mother (with a smile): But I am not coming back.

Disciple: You may or may not, but I will. I have a desire to come back with the Master.

Mother: Perhaps then you will not like to come back. What is there in this world? Can you tell me if there is anything worthwhile here? Therefore the Master always ate simple food, such as spinach and greens. When I offered him any delicacy he used to say, "What is there in it? It contains the same thing as the clay does."

Disciple: But why do you speak of Sri Ramakrishna? Has he any peer in this world?

Mother: Ah! That's true! Can you find any other person like him? How nice it would be if there were!

Uncle Baroda came with the mail. There was a letter to her from one of my brothers, requesting her to persuade me to return home. Though short, the letter was written in a good style and contained beautiful sentiments. The Mother said, "Ah! What a nice letter!" Then she said addressing me, "Why don't you return

home? Live in the world, earn money and bring up a family." She was testing me. "But, Mother," said I, "please do not say that."

I began to weep. She said to me with great tenderness, "My child! Please do not weep. You are the living God. Who is able to renounce all for His sake? Even the injunctions of Destiny are cancelled if one takes refuge in God. Destiny strikes off with her own hand what she has written about such a person. What does one become by realising God? Does he get two horns? No; but he develops discrimination between the real and the unreal, gets spiritual consciousness, and goes beyond life and death. God is realised in Spirit. How else has any one seen God? Has God talked to anybody? One sees God in Spirit, talks to Him in Spirit and establishes relationships with Him in Spirit.

Disciple: No, Mother. There is something else besides. One gets a direct vision of God.

Mother: That Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) alone had. The Master kept with himself the key to Narendra's liberation. What else is spiritual life besides praying to the Master, repeating His name and contemplating Him? (With a smile) And the Master—what is there after all in Him? He is our own eternally!

Disciple: Mother! Please see that I realise the right thing; just that, 'our own'!

Mother: Must I repeat it? (Firmly) You will certainly realise it. Certainly.

It was the evening of the following day. I was talking to the Mother in her room. She lay on her bed. The conversation drifted to the Vedanta. I said to her, "Nothing exists in the

world except name and form. It cannot be proved that matter exists. Therefore the conclusion is that God or such other things do not exist." My idea was that such things as the Master or the Holy Mother were also illusory. She at once understood my thought and said, "Narendra once said to me, 'Mother! The Knowledge that explains away the Lotus Feet of the Guru is nothing but ignorance. What is the validity of Knowledge if it proves that the Guru is naught?' Give up this dry discussion, this hodge-podge of philosophy. Who has been able to know God by reasoning? Even sages like Suka, Vyasa and Shiva are like big ants, at the most."

Disciple: I want to know. I understand a little too. How can one stop reasoning?

Mother: Reasoning does not disappear as long as one has not attained perfect Knowledge.

The conversation referred to creation.

Disciple: Well, Mother! Has God created, all at once, these innumerable beings, big and small? Or at different periods?

Mother: Do you mean to say that God has created them, one after another, as a painter paints the eyes, face, nose and so forth with his brush; or as a clay-modeller makes his dolls, limb by limb? No, it is not so. God has a unique power (Shakti). By His 'yea,' the world's system evolves; and by his 'nay', it disappears. Whatever exists has come into being all at once, not one by one.

Big ants were moving about her room in search of food. Pointing to one of these, I said, "Why, then, has this one fallen behind? It will be ages before this ant becomes man." "Yes," said the Mother, "That's true.

All wake up after the end of a cycle, as if from a deep slumber."

I asked her about Japam and spiritual austerities. The Mother said, "Through these spiritual disciplines the ties of past Karma are cut asunder. But the realisation of God cannot be achieved without ecstatic Love (Prema-Bhakti) for Him. Do you know the significance of Japam and spiritual austerities? By these, the power of the sense-organs is subdued."

Referring to Lalit Chatterjee who had been dangerously ill, the Mother said, "Lalit used to give me great financial help. He would take me out in his carriage. He gives much for the Divine Service in the Temple-gardens of Kamarpukur and Jayram-

bati. My Lalit has a heart worth a million rupees. There are again people who are miserly in spite of their wealth. The rich should serve God and His devotees with money and the poor should worship by repeating His name." Referring to ecstatic Love, the Mother said, "Did the cowherd boys of Brindavana please Sri Krishna through Japam or meditation? They realised Him through ecstatic Love. They used to say to Him, as to an intimate friend, 'Come here, O Krishna! Eat this! Take this!'"

Disciple: How can one feel yearning for God without seeing the manifestation of His love?

Mother: Yes, you can do so. There lies the grace of God.

## THE RELIGION OF ADVAITA VEDANTA

*By Professor G. R. Malkani, M.A.*

[Professor G. R. Malkani, Head of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, points out in this short essay that Advaita 'is the highest religion, the religion of truth *par excellence*.']

**R**ELIGION may be defined as the living relationship of the finite to the infinite. It is generally confined to feeling. This, however, is not very satisfactory. It does not satisfy the needs of the intellect. Feeling is necessarily based upon belief or what we call faith. All religions of feeling have therefore to formulate their respective creeds. The creed must not be questioned. Since we cannot know God, we can only believe in Him. And the more strongly and unquestioningly we believe, the more easy becomes the feeling. It is therefore part of this way of approach to the infinite that we must be intellectually dogmatic. We must

not allow doubts and questions to affect our faith.

Advaita Vedanta is not primarily a religion of feeling. But it does not dispense with feeling. Feeling is necessary to all religion. It is life itself. What Advaita Vedanta does is to eliminate the creed. Truth must not be merely believed, or taken on faith. It must be known. It must be seen. Advaitism is accordingly the religion of knowledge. It reverses the positions of truth and love in religion. Truth comes first. Love can only follow.

It may now be said that it is not possible for man, who is finite, to know God, who is infinite. We can know

Nature which is composed of finite objects ; and we can know other souls, for these are finite. We cannot know what has no limitation and what transcends all description. We can only believe in Him and give of our best to Him. But even if we granted that we could know Him, this knowledge would not have any religious value. Knowledge is haughty. It makes one conceited and self-conscious. It does not make one religiously-minded. If anything, it is an obstruction to religious life. Knowledge then is not possible. And if it is possible it has no religious value.

This criticism of knowledge is based upon a wrong notion of it. Truth must evidently be the primary concern of every religion. If a religion is not based upon truth, what claim can it have upon my allegiance ? What message can it have for my life. But if that is so, there is a natural question, what is the truth ? What must I believe ? If I have to believe something, I cannot rest with the belief. Belief is an intellectual attitude towards reality. I believe reality to be such and such. Belief implies the possibility of knowledge. If I believe, there is a demand to know. Belief must be turned into knowledge. Taken by itself, it is incomplete knowledge. It is knowledge without the assurance of knowledge. If we stop with belief and do not proceed further to knowledge, we have a vital need for our life unsatisfied. To say that knowledge of God is not possible is to say that all belief regarding Him is unjustified and has no truth-claim. This will render religious life quite valueless and meaningless.

Knowledge may be possible. But has it any religious value ? It is

arguable that knowledge is a dispassionate mental attitude towards things or reality in general. When I know anything, I have a certain awareness. That is all. The awareness does not personally affect me. This is in a way exemplified in our knowledge of Nature. We can use this knowledge for personal ends. But the use to which we put our knowledge is external to the knowledge itself. We may use it for good ends or for ends that are evil. But the knowledge itself is indifferent to these ends. So far as our inner well-being is concerned, this is still more true. Knowledge of Nature does not increase our inner happiness. It does not elevate the soul. It is a matter of indifference to us whether the course of Nature runs in one particular direction or in the contrary direction, so long as it runs in some direction and the events in it show a certain amount of uniformity which may help study and prediction.

The knowledge which is demanded by the religious consciousness is not knowledge of this kind. It is not like knowledge of Nature which has only a biological value. It is in several essential respects different. Firstly, it is not knowledge which anybody who runs, might have. There must be belief in God before the demand arises to know Him. If anyone questions the possibility of such knowledge, there is no means of converting him. He is without hope. He is beyond grace. Logically, such a man should have no religion. He should not believe in any reality beyond the sensible world. The minimum that is needed is belief in a higher reality which is, like us, spiritual in character, and the ground of the world. Once we believe, however, we cannot escape

the demand to know. It is a logical consequence of the belief.

Secondly, this knowledge is not the knowledge of an external reality. We can never know God in any sensible image. God is, in this respect, the very opposite of Nature. The only intuition of the spirit that we unquestioningly possess and that we cannot deny, is the intuition of our inmost self. This self is "inmost" in the literal sense of the term; for it can never be projected out or objectified. If there is a spiritual world-ground, it cannot be different from this. For if it were different it would be some kind of object to us, and so in a way a part of Nature; it would lose its spiritual character. We know the *living* spirit only in our own self. Advaitism tells us that the world-ground, being spiritual in character, cannot be distinct from this self,—it is this self itself. Can such a knowledge of identity, if it could be realised, be neutral so far as our inner well-being is concerned?

This brings us to the last point of difference to which we want to draw attention here. This knowledge has a vital connection with our true happiness. To know is to become a different man altogether. We may give an illustration from common experience. If I believe that I am a

poverty-stricken and helpless human being, and in some supreme moment of good fortune I am told with convincing evidence that I am heir to a great fortune which through ignorance I have not claimed, can such knowledge be indifferently received by me? Will not the mere communication of such news transform my whole being? It is just the same with the knowledge of our identity with the supreme reality which is God. We can no longer retain our old finite self and live a life based on that. What news can be happier than the news of identity?

Advaita Vedantism is the religion of all religions, for it seeks to transform faith into knowledge. It leaves nothing to mere belief. It has no room for dogma. The truth must be seen. And when the truth is seen, can the feeling be restrained, or can will go its own way uncontrolled? That is in the nature of the case impossible. If we know that the fire burns, we do not proceed to experiment with fire or stretch our hand into it. That is the test of real knowledge. We cannot separate knowledge from life. Advaitism thus sums up what is best in any religion. It is the highest religion, the religion of truth *par excellence*.

## THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF UNITY

*By Mary Anita Ewer*

[Miss Ewer is a deep and unbiassed student of comparative religion as is evident from her eminent book "A Survey of Mystical Symbolism" published in London by the S. P. C. K., in 1933. In the following article she expounds in brief what constitutes the Christian parallel to the great Upanishadic doctrine embodied in the sentence "Thou art That." The doctrine of unity stated here has in many important respects a resemblance to Sri Ramanuja's conception of the Absolute.]

**W**HEN persons reared in two differing religions meet, three attitudes are possible. They may dispute over the relative merits and demerits of their religions, each for the most part praising the virtues of his own, and pointing out the lacks in the other religion. Or, perceiving the evils which arise from such disagreements, such as hostility, proselytism, misrepresentation, injustice, and the like, they may join in the praise of tolerance and of brotherly kindness, achieving these ends by a tacit agreement—each to drop, to consider as trivial and outworn, all those beliefs, feelings, and practices in which they differ. It takes persons of real discernment to perceive that "tolerance" of this kind destroys the values of *both* religions and gains nothing but a superficial peace. If we see this, we attempt to take the third attitude, which is, to maintain with fidelity our own creed, our own devotion, the sacred practices into which we have been solemnly initiated, while at the same time refusing to attack or to belittle religions whose values are alien to us, and whose lacks, regarded from the standpoint of our particular needs, seem so painfully apparent.

It takes an exceptionally deep soul to go still farther, and attempt actu-

ally (as Sri Ramakrishna is said to have done) to enter within the experience of another religion without breaking his fidelity to his own. Yet, this attitude of full appreciation without any straying from one's own pathway, is the only attitude which can lead to mutual understanding and to a community of religions based not on negations but on positive values. It is good to work toward such a sympathetic insight. This paper is intended as a contribution towards that insight, in regard to one outstanding religious misunderstanding.

One of the commonest Christian criticisms of non-Christian religion is that it lacks a definite sense of a God whom we are created to believe in, hope in, and love, a definite sense of a Power beyond weak individual man, upon whose might and friendship he can rely. Conversely, one of the commonest criticisms directed against Christianity by those who have felt the charms of Eastern spirituality, is that Christians lack a definite sense of the Higher Self, the "That art Thou" of Hindu tradition and teaching.

It would be fairly easy to find quotations from both Eastern and Western religious writers, either to contradict the substance of these criticisms, or to uphold them and claim



them as assets rather than as liabilities. For there have been non-Christian mystics living lives of passionate devotion to a beloved personal Deity, and there have been Christian transcendentalists. Moreover, many Eastern religious thinkers seem to consider that their concept of the Highest Reality as abstract and impersonal is a mark of advanced spiritual discernment; while similarly, Christian thinkers frequently maintain that the Christian condemnation of self-worship is one of the great and manifest superiorities of Christianity.

One might add that it would likewise be easy to dismiss the question of God, whether personal or impersonal, and the question of the Self, whether essentially Divine or essentially individual, as of no interest for practical men. The advocate of superficial "tolerance" always regards such speculations as standing in the way of devotion to human brotherhood.

But there is a real problem in these criticisms and oppositions. It is partly a problem of temperament, of racial development, or of whatever else is the cause of the congenital difference between Eastern and Western outlooks. In so far as the seem-

ing contradiction is racial, it probably meets a real need.<sup>1</sup>

It is not generally known, but it is nevertheless the fact, that Christianity has its own doctrine of the "That art Thou", a doctrine sound and approved in its theology, and available to all who are spiritually ready for it. The interesting part is, that though this doctrine is in no wise hidden, yet in practice, only those who are ready for it are apt to perceive it. The Christian presentation of creatureliness, of the worship of the Divine Other, on the other hand, is generally necessary for the spiritual development of those with whom Christianity has to deal. The individual and self-centred self must learn not to find its own end in its own limited manifestation, not to rely on its own strength, not to worship its own cravings and its own limited vision. In this, Christianity is true to its mission.

But the difference of racial temperament and outlook is only a partial cause for the misunderstanding. The real difficulty lies in the fact that those who experience spiritual things are forced to try to express

<sup>1</sup>To illustrate this, all one needs to do is to compare the attitude of religious persons born and educated in Eastern traditions, with that of some Americans who, reared as Christians, later attempt to train themselves (without the guidance of a competent teacher) by Hindu religious methods gained from books or lectures. All too often, these would-be spiritual persons are much too entranced with the new concept of their "Divine Self," their "Sacred I Am Consciousness," their essential divinity. They grievously afflict their neighbours by their exaltation of their individual, limited, fallible selves—their individual, thoughts, impulses, feelings—as high and

shining Truth. To speak frankly, from the Christian standpoint, they make nuisances of themselves from lack of the barest elements of humility, good sense, and regard for their neighbours. But is this the way and the attitude of the real Hindu? By no means. It is certainly no part of the true meaning of "That art Thou," as it is understood within Hinduism, to exalt and deify and make sacrosanct all one's crude self-centredness, to encourage obtrusive pride, and to discourage reverence, worship, religious awe and religious love. On the contrary, the real Hindu, as known by his writings and speeches, cultivates these latter virtues with an admirable simplicity and sincerity.

these in human language, which has no adequate terms for matters outside the range of ordinary experience. That is, they are forced to express them by means of analogies, which is to say, by means of symbols. Naturally, especially in regard to the more lofty and transcendent of spiritual experiences, mystics of different languages and different habits of everyday life, choose differing symbolic expressions. Hence it becomes difficult to translate the inner meaning of the symbols of one religion into the language of another. The stranger does not get the feeling intended, because his associations are different.<sup>2</sup>

In the comparative study of religious teachings, it is obvious that teachings on the same subject ought to be compared together. But due to the above-mentioned differences in symbolic expression of high truths, the comparison actually made often is between teachings intended to illustrate differing aspects of the matter. This is the case here, where Western stress on the eternal value and immortality of the individual is compared with the Eastern denial of separateness as an ultimate thing—and where, also, Christian belief in a Divine Creative Power, other than ourselves, is compared with the Hindu vision of a Divine Self which is the Higher Self of every being. Stated thus, we have a necessary contradic-

<sup>2</sup> A striking though crude illustration of this fact is the humorous anecdote about the Eskimos to whom the Christian missionary preached that the results of wrong behaviour in this life would be immersion in a hell of burning fire in the next life. The Eskimos, who live in a country of great and painful cold, immediately began to do every wrong thing they could imagine, in order to insure being warm enough in the future!

tion, based on the one hand, in the Western demand for relationships between individual selves, and on the other, in the Eastern realization that, beyond all these weary ways, the Self is One.

But this is not the true comparison. I leave it to Eastern devotees to furnish us with the real Hindu parallels for our Christian worship of the Divine Other, Who is Father, Master, Friend, Lover, as well as Creator, Life-Giver, and Judge. I leave it to them confidently, knowing that they can do it! But I will suggest, for my contribution, the real Christian parallel for the doctrine of the Self which is One.

Saint Paul, one of the earliest Christian thinkers and teachers, wrote as follows:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, XII, 12-13.

"Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." *Ibid.*, verse 27.

"There is one body, and one Spirit . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." *Epistle to the Ephesians*, IV, 4-6.

"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him . . . buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him." *Epistle to the Colossians*, II 9-12.

There is One Body, of which we all are members—or, as we would say to-day, individual cells.<sup>3</sup>

One Self, is the Eastern teaching. One Body, says the Western. Is this not a weaker, a less exalted concept? I think not. For the One Body is the "Body Mystical" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here a very brief digression into theology will be necessary. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal God Incarnate—not *was*, but *is*. This statement does not mean, in the thought of the majority of Christians of all ages, that He manifested Himself on earth merely to teach us, to revive true religion, and to give us an inspiring example for our imitation, and that afterwards He left us alone, to look back in yearning to that bright time. We have believed rather, that He, the Divine Self, Who eternally possesses His Divine Nature, added to His possessions *not* a man, *not* a human life, but human nature as a whole—ideally, all Humanity itself. The reason why we have believed in one *unique* Incarnation of

\* Other expressions of Saint Paul on the same subject are :

"The church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" *Ephesians* I, 22-23.

"For the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from Whom the whole body fitly joined together.... maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" *Ephesians* IV, 12-16.

"We are members of His body" *Ephesians* V, 30.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body" *Colossians* III, 15.

Deity, is that we think of that *one* as never-ending. We do not think of the Incarnate Deity as having (like one of us) a human, individual self. We think instead of the Divine Self as possessing two natures, one Divine and the other human—the latter being the true nature of all human-kind. And although this Incarnation, we hold, took place uniquely in history at a certain time, that event was an earthly reflection of the fact that it really took place in Eternity. The Incarnation is thus without beginning and without end. And, for the personal benefit of every one of us, the "Body Mystical" is the "extension" of the Incarnation, the means by which it is made even *more* present to us than it was to His disciples in Galilee.

The result of all the foregoing is that, in Christian traditional theology and mysticism, the "Body Mystical" (which includes and embraces all baptized Christians, and, from the point of view of Eternity, includes and embraces all mankind) is a Body possessed by, indwelt by, vivified by, one Divine Self. This concept is no mere theological quibbling. It enters into the thought and devotion of Christians, even of many who would become confused if asked to formulate the theology of it. I remember, when I was still quite young, reading a pious instruction concerning Baptism. It said in effect (I quote from memory only): "I act a lie, whenever I make my self and not His Self the centre. When I was baptized, my self died. I was made a member of Him, that His Self should be the centre of my consciousness and of my life." Spiritual directors frequently tell their pupils to meditate on the Life and Self of the

Lord within them, He their true centre, the Self of the One Body within which is their life. It would be possible to quote many expressions on this subject, not only from specifically mystical writings, but from the spiritual instructions of ordinarily devout teachers.

Such, then, is the Christian way of teaching that the Self is One. It is a teaching of the One Body, the Body Mystical within which we all are cells. Nor is this all. For we the cells are nourished (in another sacrament) with the Sacramental Body of the Lord, which is a Food that transforms the eater into Itself.

And since this Food likewise is the Body of the One Self, our Lord, this thought is one of the pathways along which the Christian who is ready for it may find the doctrine of "That art Thou."<sup>4</sup>

When the parallel is stated in these terms, the contradiction between the Hindu and the Christian formulation appears in a new light. It no longer expresses a demand, by the Western devotee, that his individual self may not pass away, or that individuality may be held sacred. The opposition, for there is one, relates rather to the stress laid upon the *body* of manifestation. The Lord, in Christian thought, is never without His Body. The Christian system, in its traditional and ancient form, climbs to

"There are other pathways also. In spite of our shortcomings, for which thoughtful Christians are penitent, the only adequate way of formulating the Christian personal moral ideal is along these lines:— That I should act towards my neighbour as unselfishly and lovingly as if I were Christ, and that I should think and feel about my neighbour as reverently and lovingly as if he were Christ. For each of us is indeed a cell in His Body.

its spiritual heights not by withdrawing from the body, but by means of the body. Nevertheless it is a body transmuted past all earthly recognition—"His glorious Body, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (St. Paul's *Epistle to the Philippians*, III, 21).

It is true that some Christian sects, even in theory, have made much less of these deeper ideas, and that many Christians in practice have seemed ignorant of them. It is also true that many persons, in any religion, perceive only external practices, conventional ethics, and superficial statements. When such as these become leaders and teachers, as unfortunately is often the case, aspiring souls are repelled, and persons of other religions gain a false and inadequate view of the philosophical bases of the religion thus misrepresented. It is such shortsighted teachers as these (equally with fanatical ones) who give currency to such criticisms and false opposition as those cited at the beginning of this paper.<sup>5</sup>

To conclude then, why is it difficult to translate symbolic expressions and deep spiritual insights from the language of one religion to that of another? As I see it, it is difficult for three reasons. The first reason is, differences of racial temperament and experience. The second is, because students of comparative religion so often confine themselves to external practices and to the ideas of persons whose religious observances are mainly conventional only. The third reason is because the

<sup>5</sup> I do not wish to deny that a religion may have *unique* values and an invaluable contribution to make to the world. I criticise only the focussing of attention on *unreal* contradictions.

deepest matters of religion, to the person who has experienced their fringes, are immeasurably sacred. It seems hard to discuss them with per-

sons of differing traditions. We therefore, in our ignorance and short-sightedness, tend to slur them over.

## RAMMOHAN RAY: THE WORLD'S UNBORN SOUL COME TO LIFE

*By Dr. S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D.*

[Professor Maitra of the Benares Hindu University points out in the ensuing paragraphs how the world's longing for universal freedom and brotherhood has been fulfilled in Rammohan and Ramakrishna, in the one through a keen logic and in the other through a purified heart.]

Rammohan Ray, to use an expression employed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in his famous address at Oxford, we see the birth of the world's unborn soul. He is the fulfilment of the world's unrealized dreams and aspirations, the realization of the world's unfulfilled hopes and desires. In him the invisible procession of the world's unsatisfied longings comes to a halt.

At every moment the world is sending out millions of unfulfilled longings and aspirations desperately seeking some vehicle in which to incarnate themselves. They are like lampless pilgrims voyaging in the dark, vainly seeking a shore. Their plight is the saddest that can be contemplated. Happily, their sufferings have touched the sympathetic chords of Tagore who has wept for them, as no one else could have done:

Man's million viewless thoughts  
and phantasies,

Desires that never cease,  
Are lured by Things, whose beauty  
is their pride,

To be their playmates by their  
side.

Dream darkly seek with ardent  
wings

To voyage to the realm of Things;  
Borne by obscurity's stream  
profound

They seek with all their might to  
grasp the ground,

With grip of stock and stone  
to stand

Awhile on solid land.

The longings of the world's unborn soul in this way roam about for countless ages until they incarnate themselves in some great man. Thus the greatest tragedy of the world is the tragedy of *not* having great men. Fortunately for India, although she may have been very unlucky in other respects, she has never suffered from a dearth of great men. In every age, at every crisis in her fortunes, she had great men to guide her.

Rammohan Ray represents the satisfaction of the deepest longings of the human race. These may be broadly classed under three heads: the longing for (a) a universal religion, (b) universal freedom, (c) a universal brotherhood of man. In Rammohan these fundamental needs obtained their fulfilment.

That Rammohan's object was not to found a new sect but to establish a universal religion is evident from

the whole trend of his activities in the field of religion. At an early age he made a profound study of the religious ideas of the Matazal and Mowahiddin sects of Arabs. He made an equally profound study of the sacred books of his own country, especially, the Upanishads. He also dived deep into the truths of Christianity. He invented his own method of a comparative study of religion, and with its help he came to the conclusion that a universal religion could be founded on the basis of the Upanishadic religion.

Rammohan's controversies with Brahmin Pandits and Christian missionaries had only one object, and that was to show the weakness and limitations of all orthodoxy, whether Hindu or Christian. For some time he encouraged the Christian Unitarians, and Adam and others with whom he worked for several years though Rammohan's object was to found a Unitarian Church in India. But Rammohan's real object was something much higher and deeper. He wanted to employ the Unitarian conceptions only so far as they fitted in with his idea of a Universal Religion. I cannot do better here than quote the words of Mr. N. C. Ganguly (Vide his article, "Foundation of the Brahmo Samaj," "Modern Review," September, 1928), "The mind of the reformer was reaching out, unsuspected and unnoticed, to something profounder than the activities of Adam and the Unitarian Committee, and the smaller was naturally engulfed by the greater. He had seen that Unitarian Christianity did not do for his friends who breathed the atmosphere of his spiritual realization. The burning passion for a God unlimited by human defini-

tions, yet recognized by all, and the insatiable hunger for a religion comprehending all types of spiritual experience could not be satisfied with Unitarianism alone, any more than with any of the other religions in the field. They were for him, whether it was Hinduism, Christianity or Muhammadanism, like chemical reagents which yielded the tested resultant of universal religion."

Similarly, Rammohan's love of freedom had a universal ring in it. It was not merely freedom for his own country but it was freedom for the whole human race. The incident at the Cape of Good Hope, on his voyage to England, when he saw a French ship flying the flag of "liberty, equality and fraternity", illustrates this. His unbounded joy, which made him so completely oblivious of his surroundings that he received a physical injury the effect of which lasted six months, was the happiness of a man who could make himself one with humanity to such an extent that the realization of the idea of freedom in any part of the world could send a thrill of unspeakable joy through his whole frame. And what are we to say of his interest in the Reform Bill of 1832? It was a matter which concerned only the political life of England, but Rammohan saw in it an important advance in the struggle of mankind for freedom. It was only the fullest realization of his identity with the whole human race that could make him see like this.

And lastly, as the crowning feature of this universal humanity in him, he was burning with a desire to establish a universal brotherhood of man. His vision stretched far into the future, as the vision of all prophets

does. Even to-day we seem to be as far as ever from the realization of this idea. The League of Nations, the gift of President Wilson to humanity, exists more in name than in reality. Its authority has been openly flouted by nations, and it has been powerless to stop that butchering of man by man which is called war. Yet Rammohan, more than a century ago, wanted to set up not a mere puppet organization, like the League of Nations, but a real International Court

for the settling of disputes between nation and nation.\*

Blessed is the country that could produce in the same century two Ramas—Rammohan and Ramakrishna—both burning with the same ardent humanism, one realizing it through reason and logic, and the other through the heart. In both of them, the world's unborn soul which had been roaming unceasingly, vainly seeking a vehicle in which to incarnate itself, at last found a resting place.

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## RELIGION AND MORALITY

*By Prof. Girindranarayan Mallik, M.A.*

[Mr. Mallik is the Professor of Sanskrit in the Comilla College. In the following article he argues by marshalling Eastern and Western views that it is the sublime concept of religion alone that feeds the root of morality—the most vital force of progress and civilization.]

**W**HEN most of the scientific thinkers of the West and some of the Indian thinkers of the present day say that religion ought to be thrust away from the world, surely they do not mean by religion what the Indian seers of the ancient times understood by Dharma. Indeed religion, if understood in the sense of "certain hard and fast rules of conduct and ceremonial observances," has very little place in the progressive civilisation of the world, even if it does not deserve the fate of being thrust away altogether; for such religion very often gives rise to fanaticism, and the less it appears in the world, the better for its upkeep and real progress. But religion implies something more. As distin-

guished from fetish-worship and the like, religion in the true sense of the term implies a faith in, and devotion to, the Absolute Being. Religion, in other words, implies a relation between a worshipping subject, an individual soul, and a worshipped object, the Absolute Lord. It implies further an element of distinction as well as one of unity between the subject and the object. Religion thus supposes two main factors which are different and yet related—so far distinct and so far akin. It involves something more. The Absolute Being does not act on man by the direct manifestation of His absolute essence, nor does man know Him by immediate vision. Take away the written word—the scriptures, take away

\**Vide* 'is letter to the French Foreign Minister, quoted in the article, "Rammohan

Ray on International Fellowship," *Modern Review*, October 1928.

again the special revelation, and an impassable chasm will separate man from the Absolute Being, and all religion will at once be destroyed.

Briefly speaking, then, religion implies the conception and concrete realisation, in the manner laid down in the scriptures, by the individual soul, of the Supreme Identity that pervades and acts as the immanent regulator of the universe of being. Such conception of the One and the many, again, is what is understood by the Indian word Dharma. The primary function of Dharma or religion consists more in seeking release and redemption from the world-process than in accounting for its origin. But secondarily, Dharma cannot but imply certain sacraments or duties incumbent upon men in their mutual relation with reference to the affairs of the world. Such duties, again, mainly consist of what are called moral duties and moral obligations; and these duties, implied as they are by the term Dharma, must be subservient to the attainment of Self-realisation. Evidently, therefore, there is a close relation between religion and morality, and our object in writing this article is to show what that relation is.

The fact that there is a relation between religion and morality has been discussed by all philosophers, European and Indian. Looking to the west we find that a class of thinkers, e.g., Descartes, Locke, Paley and others hold that religion is the source of morality—it is religion that leads to morality. Others, again, e.g., Kant and Martineau suppose that morality is the source of religion. Matthew Arnold goes further to say that religion is nothing but morality touched with emotion. Thus

according to all the Western thinkers there is a very close relation between religion and morality. This is also the view of Indian thinkers, especially of those that are theistic. If now we want to know the definite character of this close relation between religion and morality, we should note carefully at first the derivative meaning of the word 'morality.' The word comes from the root 'mores' which means conduct. Conduct, again, is best defined as those acts which are not merely adjusted to ends but also definitely willed. The highest end to which these willed acts are adjusted has been differently described by different moralists of the West. Their theories about the moral ideal may be broadly classified into Hedonism, Rationalism and Eudaemonism. It is needless to repeat here the criticisms which the first two classes of theories are subject to—that the defects outweigh their merits. In their development various moral conflicts arise which cannot be explained away. But it is to be remembered that the task of the moral life is the reconciliation of these apparently conflicting claims,—the full recognition both of the rights of reason and of the rights of sensibility, and their reduction, if possible, to the unity of a common life governed by a single central principle. Such reconciliation and reduction was effected by the Eudaemonistic moralists and clearly and impressively set forth in the self-realisation theory of Professor Green.

This theory of self-realisation, where the term 'self' means the total or divine self, is to be regarded as the soundest, because it is all-absorbing, of all moral theories, and is now the accepted theory of most of the



present-day moralists of the west. That this theory is accepted in almost all our Indian scriptures goes without saying. But self-realisation cannot be really attained so long as our acts are confined to the phenomenal world with a complete forgetfulness of the Supreme All-pervading Identity. The sphere of our moral conduct is one of struggle and is full of distractions, and consequently it impedes that concentration of thought which is indispensably necessary for self-realisation. In this sphere of struggle we are always conscious of an incompleteness due to the impermanence of the objects and acts that always try to hold their sway upon the mind, and so the moral life divorced from a consciousness of the all-pervading, all-regulating Supreme Being yields only a partial solution of the contradiction between the individual and the universal nature of man. The highest result of such divorced morality, instead of being an attainment of the Infinite as a positive object of desire, is only the endless negation of the finite. Such being the case, it is quite evident that morality abstracted from religion gives us nothing but impermanence and inadequacy; and if morality is to be crowned with the final end called self-realisation, it must have a religious and hence metaphysical basis. Such close relation between religion and morality has been upheld by all theistic philosophers of the West. This again is the keynote of all the Hindu systems of thought; it runs not only through the strictly philosophical and religious systems, but also through the codes of sacraments and the ethical and didactic treatises—even through the systems of medicine and all forms

of profane literature. The codes of Manu, Yajnavalkya and others, for example, while dealing with the duties of mankind in the various stages of life in this world, lay the greatest stress upon the highest duty or Dharma which consists in Atmajnana or self-realisation, and distinctly lay down that those sacraments including all moral precepts are to be regarded as but stepping-stones to the highest Dharma.

Looking deeper into the question we find that religion is not simply the basis of, but serves as the surest guarantee for, all true morality. This appears from the true implication of the Gita text,—*Sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja; ahaṁ tvāṁ sarvapaṇebhyaḥ mokṣayishyāmi māṁ śubhāḥ*—where God calls upon all beings to resort to Him alone even at the sacrifice of all other Dharmas and He promises to save them from all sorts of transgression. The various duties referred to here may be broadly classified into three classes from the point of view of the three life-conceptions, *viz.*, the individual, the social and the divine or universal. Of these the last-mentioned one is the best meaning of life, and the duty considered from this point of view is the highest duty of mankind, the reason being that "love of God" which characterises the true nature of a being is the impelling motive of the universal life-conception. The highest duty, again, means that which transcends and yet reconciles within itself all other duties. Hence it follows that if one has recourse to the highest duty as the aim of his life, that is to say, takes to "devotion to God" as the supreme function of his own self, the systematic practice of all acts of true morali-

ty will be necessarily implied thereby, but not *vice versa*.

This fact of religion being the foundation of morality is to be accepted all the more because none of the moral virtues can by itself be regarded as an absolute standard of the rightness and wrongness of action. To take an example, veracity or the duty of truth-speaking is regarded by all moralists—European as well as Indian—as one of the few cardinal virtues. European moralists seem to be puzzled with the question whether veracity is an absolute and independent duty or a special application of some higher principle. Kant regards it as a categorical imperative binding upon all under all circumstances and irrespectively of the consequences thereof. But it is a disputed point whether truth-speaking as a duty is to be regarded as a categorical imperative, or there are any exceptions and qualifications put upon it. On this point a class of European moralists, while advocating the latter alternative, say that "though an attempt should always be made to regard the duty of veracity as a moral maxim, still, so far as the affairs of the actual world are concerned, the rule of veracity cannot be elevated into a definite moral axiom and hence there are circumstances under which even a lie is allowable." One such exceptional case as laid down in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* as also in the *Mahabharata* and *Purana* Texts (*cf.* *Streeshu narmavivahe chavrittyarthe praanasamkate*; *Gobraahmanaarthe himsaasyam naanritam syaad jugupsitam*. — *Bhagavata*) is that it may sometimes be right for persons to speak falsely to an invalid if this seems the only way of concealing facts that might produce a danger-

ous shock. Briefly speaking, a lie in the shape of *suppressio veri* or *suggestio falsi* might be allowable when the object is a noble one. We are thus led to conclude that the duty of veracity by itself cannot be regarded as an absolute standard of morality.

Consider again the case of the moral virtue called *Ahimsa*. Literally it means 'non-killing', but it is also defined as the quality of not wishing any one to suffer through one's body, words or thoughts. Whatever the meaning might be, there is no doubt that this quality occupies a very high rank in the list of moral attributes as we find in the *Mahabharata*, the *Law-Codes of Manu*, *Yajnavalkya*, etc., (*cf.*, *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* *M. S. Adh. XI, 13*; *Ahimsaa satyam asteyam saucham indriyanigraha*.—*Manu X, 63*), as well as in the *Buddhist Texts* and *Christian Theology*. Yet this very noble attribute of *Ahimsa* cannot be regarded as an absolute and independent standard of morality for the simple reason that there are restrictions put upon it. Not to speak of the act of killing other beings, even the most heinous crime of homicide is justified under certain circumstances. Suppose a ruffian is about to outrage the modesty of your wife, mother, sister or any other women; under such circumstances when all conciliatory measures fail and there is none at hand to save the situation, even the act of killing that man is justified by the ancient Law-givers of India as well as by the English Penal Codes (*cf.* *Gurum vaa baalavridhdau vaa braahmanam vaa bahusrutam : aatataayinam aayaantam hanyaad evaavichaarayan*. *Manu, VIII, 350*, which means—"One may slay without hesitation an assassin who ap-

proaches with murderous intent, whether he be one's teacher, a child or an aged man, or a Brahmin deeply versed in the Vedas"). Besides, the whole physical atmosphere is so completely charged with germs of animals that living itself is impossible without killing them. On this point compare the Bhagvata text: Jeevo jeevasya jeevanam—"One created being is the sustenance of another"; the Mahabharata text: Sooksmayonecni bhootaani tarkagamyaani kaani chid, paksmanopi nipaaten a yeshaam syaad skandhaparyayah, as well as the text: Praanasyaannam idam sarvam—"All this is the food for life," and others which we come across in the Mahabharata, the Vedanta Suttas and some of the Upanishads. It is needless to discuss the point further. The fate of these two cardinal virtues is shared by all the other moral virtues.

We are now in a position to state definitely that wherever there is a true religious spirit, *i.e.*, sincere devotion to God, there cannot but exist all moral qualities and moral excellences. This is distinctly stated in the text: Yasyaasti bhaktir bhagavaty anante sarvair gunais tatra samaasate suraah haraav abhaktasya kuto mahad gunaah manorathenaasati dhaavato bahih—(Bhagavata V 18, 12), which means that all good qualities exist in a harmonious way in him who is fervently devoted to God, and none is to be found in one who is not devoted; for the latter's mind is ever directed to transcendent worldly objects.

An exhaustive enumeration of these qualities is useless for our present purpose. All that we can say is that according to the view of all prominent moralists the attribute of kindness occupies a very important place

in the long list of moral qualities. The external duty of such kindness *viz.*, the promotion of happiness is according to Indian scriptures to be directed towards all sentient beings; and on this point the Indian theory, though it differs from that of the intuitional moralists who hold that kindly dispositions are to be cultivated towards men only, agrees with that of the commonsense moralists who hold that the pain of animals is *per se* to be avoided. Since kindness, again, is best defined as a conscious feeling within one's mind of the sufferings of others, the most natural implication of the quality of kindness is service to the whole creation. This idea of universal good and service is now generally accepted as the highest conception of morality, and it far surpasses, in respect of fulness and richness of content, that of 'service to humanity' which characterises the conception of religion in the Positivistic Philosophy of Comte. Based upon the social life-conception, Comte's theory is open to many serious objections coming especially from the pen of Count Tolstoi in his noble attempt at an exposition of the true theory of Christian morality. "The man who loves humanity, what is it that he loves? There is a State, there is a people, there is the abstract conception of man. But humanity as a concrete conception is impossible. Humanity? Where is its limit? Where does it end and where does it begin? Does it exclude the savage, the idiot, the inebriate, the insane? If one were to draw a line of demarcation so as to exclude the lower representatives of the human race, where ought it to be drawn? Ought it to exclude the Negroes as they do in the United States, or the Hindus

as some Englishmen do, or the Jews as does another nation. But if we include all humanity without exception, why should we restrict ourselves to men? Why should we exclude the higher animals some of whom are superior to the lowest representatives of the human race? We do not know humanity in the concrete nor can we fix its limits. Humanity is a fiction and therefore it cannot be loved."

Indeed the serious blunder of the Positivistic philosopher whereby he falls into such inextricable fallacies lies in his ill-chosen social life-conception, and in the sad ignorance of the fact that the highest conception of morality must have a solid and clearly-defined foundation in the human soul, whereas love of humanity is but a theoretical conclusion reached through analogy. The real point to be specially noted here is that the essence of the individual soul being love, its well-being may be traced not to the fact that it loves this object or that one, but to the fact that it loves the Prin-

ciple of all things, God, whom it strives to realise through love, and, that it will, through love of God, love all men and all things. In other words, the foundation of true morality must be well-chosen, that the divine life-conception which is the best of all life-conceptions must be regarded as the basis of all true morality in the highest sense of the term. And if that is done, there would be no objection about the term 'humanity,' the more because according to the theory of creation as laid down in the Sata-patha Brahmana and Manu Texts, the concept of humanity is not restricted to mankind alone but to the whole body of created beings.

It is now clearly established that love of God and love of the whole creation are the two cardinal doctrines of the two allied things—religion and morality, and that they are inseparably connected. There is no doubt that these two qualities are indispensably necessary for the establishment of world peace and harmony.

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## THE POWERS OF THE MIND

*By Swami Vividishananda*

[Swami Vividishananda is the leader of the Vedanta Society of Denver, Colorado. In the following article he describes some of the wonderful powers that the practice of Yoga develops, and says why spiritual aspirants should not seek them.]

VERY few of us realize that we have at our beck and call an exceptionally powerful instrument which we can use for the furtherance of any end we want to achieve in life.

This instrument is a disciplined mind. Even as the highly perfected lens of a telescope reveals the mysteries of the heavens, a mind which is disciplined can be utilized for the solving of the riddles of existence. It will

bring to us the knowledge of realms hitherto unknown and give us the possession of powers which will make us almost omnipotent. If we are spiritually inclined, such a mind can be directed towards the attainment of supreme Wisdom. If, on the contrary, we have desires for enjoyment, it can help us substantially along that direction. Wise and discreet is the man who knows the proper use of his

mind and has disciplined it thoroughly for the realisation of the highest ideal.

A mind which is under full control will act as a powerful ally, helping us in every way and bringing us peace and happiness. But a mind which is unruly and wayward will be one of our worst enemies, creating mischief and havoc and making us extremely miserable. The achievements we have on earth in different departments are the gifts of a disciplined mind. And all that we consider as curses to human society are the offsprings of a mind which is undisciplined.

We shall consider here some of those powers of the human mind which may be described as supernatural, because they are not possessed by common men, not even by those whom we call talented. These powers represent that class of psychic phenomena, the nature of which is shrouded in mystery and which have given a divine halo to those whom we worship as saints, seers and mystics—the wielders of such powers. The history of religion abounds in such phenomena.

Jesus Christ, the Prophet of Nazareth, has been associated with such powers. The Bible says that he healed the sick suffering from incurable diseases, gave sight to those born blind, made the lame walk, brought the dead back to life, walked on water without sinking and fed a multitude sumptuously with five loaves of bread. And he did these acts either by a touch, or a wave of his hand or by a mere wish. We read stories in Hindu sacred books of similar and perhaps more stunning acts ascribed to the Yogis and mystics of India.

Without being able to account for such phenomena scientifically, orthodoxy has so far termed them miracles;

whereas critical minds, not willing to accept anything which cannot be tested in the crucible of experimentation, have rejected them as superstitions. It is only lately that such phenomena are being studied scientifically in the West, although the science of Yoga did that in India more than two thousand years ago and with great precision.

In a recent number of the *Washington Times*, Mr. Edwin C. Hill describes the feats of an Indian Mohammedan: "A bright fire, producing a heat of 800 degrees Fahrenheit, burned in two trenches, which were twelve feet long and six feet wide. Nine tons of wood and charcoal had been thrown into the trenches, twenty gallons of kerosene poured on the wood and then the torch had been applied. The fire had been burning for eight hours and had reached its fiercest intensity.

"Kuda Bux stepped forward, a thin young man with the brown skin of the Indian, and wearing a black flowing robe peculiar to his country. His feet were bare. With a glance to the doctors and scientists who looked on, he stepped into the fiery pit. Step by step, with no semblance of haste, he walked the length of the first trench. And in the same manner he negotiated the second.

"The doctors rushed to examine his feet. They were not burnt. In fact, a piece of plaster, which a doctor had placed on the sole of the right foot, was not even scorched. The temperature of the feet was the same as it had been before Bux stepped on the coals.

"Two English medical students volunteered to attempt the act of the Indian. They took just one step and leaped with severely burned feet."

Being a Hindu, born and brought up in India,—that land of mystery, you can well expect that I can tell many such stories and tell with authority. As a matter of fact, I was an eye-witness to several such phenomena. I knew one Hindu Yogi—a real Yogi and not a fake, who was a man of God-realization. He underwent, with a smiling countenance, a major operation without ether or chloroform, to the amazement of the doctors and attendants present. Inquired as to how he could do it, he replied: "It is very simple. I just withdrew my mind from that part of the body which was operated on." He was not sensible to pain at all, so he could keep up his natural cheerfulness. Much later he foretold the exact date of his passing away and left his body even as a Yogi would do in an exalted mood, repeating sacred texts from the scriptures.

Several years before when I was studying in the University at Calcutta I saw another superhuman feat performed by a Hindu professor, who was visiting different cities with his circus. Of the many feats the one that is still vivid in my memory is the performance in which he took an elephant, not a baby but a full grown one, on his chest, and he did this very easily by holding his breath. To all outward appearance, he was not much of an athlete, being a man of medium size and height, weighing perhaps not more than one hundred and sixty pounds and a strict vegetarian. I was told that he could do this because he was an expert in breathing exercises—one of the important practices of Hatha Yoga—the Hindu science of attaining body-control, health, longevity and youthfulness.

On another occasion, when I was living in one of our peace retreats in the Himalayas, I read in a newspaper the story of a Yogi who demonstrated extraordinary will-power by arresting the motion of a moving train in Southern India.

The Yogi in question was not of prepossessing looks. Wearing long hair which was matted all over, he had nothing on except a piece of ragged loin cloth. Taking him for a common labourer they put him out of a second class compartment of a train which he had been travelling. But when the train stopped after moving a little, although the engine and everything were in perfect order, there was quite a little commotion in the station platform. Later on, when it was discovered that the Yogi in loin cloth was responsible for the whole trouble, the station officials made sufficient amends for their misconduct by putting him back where he had been and the train started moving.

Although I cannot vouch for the truth of this particular story and the story told by Edwin C. Hill, I believe that such acts are practicable. Making allowance for people's love of mystery and tendency to exaggerate, and accepting also the fact that many of these stories are fakes, it would not be fair to reject all such phenomena as unnatural. Such acts did take place in the past and do take place even now. Only most of us do not know the laws under which they operate.

By whatever names we may call such phenomena, miracles are not supernatural performances. They are neither black magic nor trickery, nor are they the doings of supernatural agencies. They are as natural as any

common event like the fall of an apple, the rustling of leaves or the flight of a bird. Nature is infinite and unlimited. We know very little of her, so we are sceptical when we hear about such phenomena. Rightly has Shakespeare said : "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Many of our scientific achievements—now accomplished facts—were undreamt of and unbelievable a hundred years ago.

We shall try to explain miraculous phenomena in the light of the science of Yoga which aims at the complete knowledge and mastery of Nature, external and internal. An event isolated appears miraculous and supernatural, but if we see the same event happening elsewhere, it assumes the aspect of a natural occurrence. In order to discover the laws that govern such phenomena, we have to study them closely and deeply. Yoga is the science which reveals the secrets of Nature and explains the causes of miraculous deeds. It goes to the source of all powers and studies their laws. And the instrument it uses is a concentrated disciplined mind.

According to the science of Yoga, the various forces of Nature, like heat, light, electricity, magnetism, gravitation, as also life and consciousness are but expressions of one living intelligent energy called Prana. If we can master this Prana, within as well as outside, we shall be in a position to manipulate all the natural forces the way we choose, and it will make us practically omnipotent and omniscient. As distinguished from science, which proceeds bit by bit, Yoga goes to the root, the highest generalization, and tries to fathom the mysteries of Prana and its laws, and the rest

follow as a natural consequence. Whereas science relies upon mechanical apparatus in its research work, Yoga has no other instrument except a disciplined and concentrated mind.

The Yogic method of mastering Nature is this : Be your own master. Know your own self and you are omnipotent and omniscient. As man has within himself a universe which may be described as an exact-replica of the universe outside, he has unlimited possibilities. He is Divine—ever pure, blessed, free and all-knowing. He is like a circle whose center is within himself and circumference nowhere.

Because of ignorance man considers himself imperfect, limited and mortal. With self-knowledge and self-mastery will come the unfoldment of the Divinity within and the attendant powers. Then Nature, circles within circles, grades within grades, planes within planes, in infinite succession, will be his slave and give him her secrets.

With this object in view Yoga prescribes courses of self-discipline, physical as well as mental exercises, which are very efficacious, having nothing mysterious about them. Any one can practice them and verify for himself whether they are fruitful or not.

Through these practices the mind becomes finer and purer, and reaching higher levels of consciousness, it finally has access to that vast realm of universal intelligence which is identical with God. In the process of development extraordinary powers come to the Yogi along with beautiful spiritual experiences. Thought-reading, healing, prolonging youth, living a couple of hundred years, reviving the memories of past lives, distant vision

and similar powers are nothing to him. One can have them even in lower stages.

As a science, Yoga has made a special study of these phenomena and developed different techniques for the attainment of different powers. The secret of the different techniques is mental discipline and concentration applied to different subjects under varying conditions. For instance, if you want to recall the experiences of your past lives, Yoga would ask you to focus your one-pointed mind upon your subconscious background and rearrange the impressions of experiences according to their chronology, and the memory of your past incarnations will come to you in picture form.

It is the unanimous opinion of all books on Yoga that psychic powers, tempting as they are, are a great stumbling block. They are good in so far as they indicate progress and not more than that. In the quest of the supreme knowledge, which is far above the realms of phenomena, an aspirant should push on his efforts till he reaches the Goal, going beyond ignorance and bondage. There is always the tendency to identify the stage with the Goal and the danger of being sidetracked by the powers that may come. And once these powers are misused and commercialized there is every likelihood of for-

getting the Ideal. The lives of many spiritual aspirants have been ruined that way. So there is this note of warning.

Yogis who are genuine do not go about making demonstrations of these powers, not to speak of commercializing them. They command the love and admiration of humanity because of their extraordinary moral and spiritual qualities. Being embodiments of unselfishness they work for the betterment of mankind.

In the West, of late, there has been a growing craze for the study and practice of Yoga, not for its intrinsic worth and the spiritual illumination and freedom it has for its end, but for the powers which may come incidentally. Taking advantage of this craze, the so-called teachers of Yoga or psychology, both native and foreign, of which there are plenty in this country, exploit the extreme credulity of the people. These teachers promise health, youth, success, prosperity and almost everything on earth and become rich selling courses of lessons at exorbitant prices without giving practically anything. Isn't it lamentable?

Let us study and practice real Yoga which is synonymous with righteous living and spiritual understanding, and everything else shall be added unto us.



# JUSTICE AND LAW IN ANCIENT INDIA

By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.

[Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History and Economics in Madura College points out how, according to Indian conceptions, justice and law are identical.]

**A**LL lamps are not lamps the lamp of truth is the lamp of the wise, says the *Kural*.

Justice and law are oftentimes considered identical and frequently our courts are called 'Courts of Justice.' A moment's reflection, however, reveals that the ends of law and the ends of justice are some times poles asunder. What is unjust need not necessarily be illegal and what is illegal need not necessarily be unjust. To deprive a man of the money that is due to him merely on the ground of limitation is absolutely unjust, but perfectly legal. To deprive a nation of its own language is certainly unjust, but not illegal. To watch a man about to be drowned without helping him is unjust, but yet not illegal. This conflict between justice and law was conspicuous by its absence in Ancient India. The Hall of Justice was called 'Arakkulam'. In those days justice was morality; morality was law and law was truthfulness. Says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, "If a man declares the law, they say he declares what is true. If a man declares what is true, they say he declares the law." To speak the truth was considered to be the greatest virtue. "If veracity and performance of a thousand horse sacrifices are weighed against each other, truth ranks even higher than a thousand horse-sacrifices" (Santi Parva).

Baud'ayana says, "The merit which thou hast acquired in the inter-

val between the night in which thou wast born and that in which thou wilt die, all that will go to the King, if thou speakest an untruth." Again Tiruvalluvar says: "He who speaks the truth with all his heart, is superior to those who make gifts and practise austerities." "Truth," says Bhishma in the Mahabharata, "is always a duty. Indeed, truth is an eternal duty. One should reverentially bow unto truth. Truth is the highest refuge of all.... Truth is the eternal Brahman." Again, Tiruvalluvar says: "There is no praise like the praise of never uttering a falsehood; without giving any suffering, it will lead to every virtue.\* Says Narada, "A tank is better than a hundred wells, an offering better than a hundred tanks, a son better than a hundred offerings and truth better than hundred sons."

Justice was considered by them as a Divine Revelation, and as such there was no separate law-making body as the modern legislature. "Dharma, self-existent and self-immanent, was the soul of being. If the wheel of Dharma stopped moving, the Varnas and Asramas were sure to perish" (Kautilya). In later times,

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\* But the question what is truth, is answered in an interesting way by Tiruvalluvar. He says, "Is it asked what is truth? It is the speaking of such words as are without the least degree of evil to others." "Even falsehood has the nature of truth if it confers a benefit that is free from fault."

when legislatures came into existence, they could not go against established customs and conventions. The offender had to answer not merely the human judge in this world, but also the Divine Judge in the next. Every offence was considered a sin. In the words of Baudhayana, "A witness who speaks falsely commits the sin of slaying three fathers and three grandfathers and seven descendants both born and unborn." Every offence, therefore, had two remedies—legal remedy and Divine remedy. The latter consisted in penances. Manu lays down, "Learn completely the penances by which all the several offences can be expiated." In fact, many dare-devils avoided committing offence—because of the fear of Divine punishment. "One class of sinful men desist from sin through fear of the rod of chastisement in the king's hands. Another class desist from similar acts through fear of Yama's rod and yet another from fear of the next world" (Santi Parva). The judge was looked upon as a representative of God on earth. The moment the judge decided a case wrongly, he would be destroyed by his Creator. Says Manu, "Where justice is destroyed by injustice or truth by falsehood, while the judges look on, there they shall also be destroyed." "Justice, being violated, destroys : justice being preserved, pre-

serves ; therefore justice must not be violated, lest violated justice should destroy."

Thus every effort was made in Ancient India to administer justice and not law. The discretion of the judges was not fettered by meaningless codes and legislatures. But the judges had numerous Smritis to look up for guidance.

Says Yajnavalkya, "The Puranas, the Nyaya, the Mimamsa, the Dharma Sastra, together with the Angas and the Vedas, are the fourteen sources of sciences and of Dharma." Says Manu: "The whole Veda is the source of the Sacred Law, next the tradition and the virtuous conduct of those who know the Veda, also the customs of holy men and finally self-satisfaction."

Administration of justice was thus the paramount function of the King, and a King's prestige depended entirely upon his successful discharge of this onerous duty.

"It is not the lance that bringeth victory unto the prince ; it is rather his sceptre, and that, provided it is straight and leaneth not to either side" (*Kural*).

It is however necessary to point out that 'Reason' was the basis, and if there was a conflict between 'Reason' and authority, the former had the preference.

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## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

(OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

By Swami Thyagisananda

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—*Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### Sutra 5

The description of the realised man's mentality is continued in this *Sutra*. But as against the positive standpoint taken in the last *Sutra*, the author here gives us a negative description of the same phenomenon.

यत् प्राप्य न किञ्चिद् वाञ्छति न शोचति न द्वेष्टि  
न रमते नोऽत्साही भवति ॥ ५ ॥

यत् which प्राप्य attaining (पुमान् man)  
किञ्चिन् anything न वाञ्छति does not  
desire न शोचति does not grieve न  
द्वेष्टि does not feel enmity न रमते  
does not rejoice उत्साही one who  
is active in his own interests न  
भवति is not.

Attaining<sup>1</sup> that, man has no more desire<sup>2</sup> for anything<sup>3</sup>. He is free from grief<sup>4</sup> and hatred<sup>5</sup>. He does not rejoice<sup>6</sup> over anything, nor does he exert<sup>7</sup> himself in furtherance of self-interest.

*Notes*—1. *Attaining*. Note the change of the verb from '*labh*' in the previous *Sutra* to '*prap*,' i.e., from 'to gain' 'to attain'. There is a subtle suggestion in this change of verb. It is to prevent a wrong emphasis being placed on the aspect of grace to the prejudice of self-effort. Narada never lets slip an opportunity to emphasize both these aspects of spiritual life, as if to correct the misconceptions and dangers arising from

the exclusive partiality to any one of these ideals.

2. *Has no more desire*.—Desire is a feeling of want arising from a sense of incompleteness or limitation, which is characteristic of the man who identifies himself with his ego. Once the ego is transcended, and perfection is attained, this characteristic disappears. Again, this feeling is possible only when one finds that there is something other than oneself that has to be attained. But the realised man is not aware of anything other than his own higher Self or God. How then can he desire for anything?

Now, since *Vairagya* or dispassion is a condition precedent to all spiritual realisation, why is absence of desire made a special characteristic of a realised man? It is meant to bring into prominence the difference in the quality of the dispassion characteristic of the aspirant and the man of realisation. As the *Jivan-muktiviveka* notes, "Previous to realisation, when one is freed from desires by self-control and other cognate virtues, the desires still persist, and are held in control only with some effort, whereas, after realisation, there being nothing like the transformations of the mind, desires cease altogether. Though the man of realisation seems to respond to such feelings as love, hatred, etc., on account

of previous habit, he is pure within as the sky (*Akasa*) which, though filled with smoke, dust, etc., remains pure." Suresvaracharya also notes the difference in his *Naishkarmya-siddhi* IV:69 wherein he says, "In a man in whom realisation has arisen, such characteristics as absence of hatred, desire, etc., exists naturally without any effort, and not as a result of active struggle." The *Sreyomarga* also says, "All that precede the acquisition of realisation are means which are brought about by effort, but they are inherent in the case of a realised man." Again in the case of the aspirant, there is at least the aspiration for liberation still remaining unconquered, whereas for a realised man even that vanishes as otherwise he cannot possibly be a realised man. It is also relevant to note here the distinction made by Patanjali in *Yoga Sūtras* I:15, 16 between higher and lower types of dispassion. The latter he describes as indifference to the *Gunas* arising out of knowledge of *Purusha*.

3. *Anything*.—It is a well-known fact recognised by all books on devotion, and illustrated by the lives of devotees, that the true *Bhaktas* would not pray for any worldly gift. Not only that, they would not pray even for *Mukti* or liberation. "Those devotees," says Rupa Goswami in *Bhaktirasamritasindhu* I:2-13, "who are delighted with the service of the lotus feet of Krishna, do not desire for even *Moksha* (liberation)." But as implied herein, and as openly declared in many devotional works, though these great souls do not desire such things as an unrealised man may desire, still they evince another kind of higher craving

for worshipping the Lord, singing and hearing His glories and serving the world as the manifestation of the Lord. Even realised persons who retain their higher ego, cannot get over this craving, which is quite different from desire proper. The difference is that worldly desire depends upon the lower animal ego for its existence. The following quotations on this point from the *Bhagavata* will be of interest. We read in I:7, 10 of that book, "Even those sages who delight solely in *Paramatman*, and the knot of whose ignorance and passion has been severed, are well devoted to the All-powerful Hari without any motive; for Sri Hari is of such excellent nature and attribute." Again in I:4, 12, we read, "Men devoted to the glorious Vasudeva, live not for their own sake but for promoting the happiness, wealth and power of the world, forsaking all comforts of the body." Suka says in 11:1-7, "Generally sages who have withdrawn themselves from the sphere of *Vedic* injunctions and prohibitions and who are devoted to *Nirguna Brahman*, find delight in discoursing upon the excellent qualities of the Lord." We find an expression of this higher kind of craving in many *Bhaktas*, and this should not be confused with the kind of desire, which is said to be absent in them. Thus we read the story of the sacrifice of Rantideva in *Bhagavatam* IV:21 12, who, after giving the last morsel of food to an untouchable, prays thus: "I do not seek from the Lord the supreme *Moksha*, accompanied by the eightfold powers or freedom from rebirth. May I be present in all beings and undergo all the sufferings for their sakes, so that they may be relieved of all their misery;" and "I do not care for

earthly empire or heaven, or release from *Samsara*. I desire only opportunity to remove the afflictions of the distressed." Again in VII:9, 41 of Bhagavata, we read in Prahlada's prayer: "Deign to glance at those who have by force of *Karma* fallen into *Samsara* and are oppressed by the anxious fear of birth and death, etc. Pray, lift up these foolish people." Prahlada thus prayed for the welfare of others, but would never accept any boon for himself. When we examine the lives of the greatest spiritual men, such as Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna, etc., we find the same phenomenon. Buddha gave up the bliss of Nirvana that he may be born again and again in successive births so that he might serve the world in all of them. When Swami Vivekananda once told Sri Ramakrishna that he loved to merge himself always in *Samadhi*, the latter retorted that that was possible for many, but that he expected something better from him, meaning thereby that he should not hanker after his individual salvation but desire for the salvation of the world. Again when Sri Ramakrishna tested the Swami by asking him to pray to the Mother for worldly prosperity, the Swami attempted several times to obey his command, and when he was asked why he could not, he said that the moment the thought of the Divine Mother came into his mind, he lost all desire for worldly prosperity, and hence could pray only for Bhakti. Again we see how he was actuated by intense desire to spread the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. We read of Christ's desire to save the souls of sinners and bring down the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and of Muhammad's desire to teach the Arabs the

principles of religion and spirituality. Narada could possibly have nothing to object to such cravings arising in the heart of the highest devotees.

4. *Free from grief*.—Ordinarily sorrow is considered to be a characteristic of *Tamas*. Vide Gita XVIII:28 and 35. But here, it includes all kinds of worldly pleasures also, whether *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic*, as all worldly pleasures must be preceded, accompanied or followed by grief. Thus Gita XVIII:36 and 38, make clear that the so-called *Sattvic* pleasure must always be earned by hard practice, that *Rajasic* pleasures turn out to be poison in the end, and that *Tamasic* pleasure is a delusion. Patanjali also says in II:15 of the *Yoga Sutra* that to the thinking man everything is painful on account of everything bringing pain either as consequence, or as anticipation of loss of happiness or as fresh cravings arising from impressions of happiness, and also as counter-action of qualities. According to Patanjali all these are based on ignorance and ego, and must be included under the common name of *Klesa* or misery. A man can expect to be free from such misery only after realisation. The realised man is beyond both pleasures and pain arising from merit and demerit—beyond all grief, a term which also includes worldly joy which has always got misery either as its root or fruit.

As in the case of desire, the absence of grief in a perfect man does not signify that he is devoid of sympathy for the miseries of others. To one who feels his neighbour as oneself, it is impossible not to sympathise with him in his miseries. To be a *Bhakta* is not to develop a stony heart, and

be careless of the woes of mankind. Sympathy is divine, and if God himself is moved to take birth for relief of such misery, there is nothing to prevent a realised man, who has become divine, from feeling sorrow for the sufferings of his oppressed neighbour. In fact this sympathy is only another expression of his divinity. But we must take care not to take all cases of sympathy to be a sign of realisation, though no doubt to that extent a person may be said to have transcended his humanity. For, we must remember, sympathy is ordinarily possible to a selfish man also. A mother sympathising with her child, huntsman with his dog and a cultivator with his bullock, are indeed cases of sympathy, but the ego is at the bottom of all such feeling. They sympathise because the child or dog or bullock belongs to them. Real sympathy is possible only for the *Bhakta* who has transcended this type of ego of ignorance, and feels the whole world as himself. The presence of this sympathy, which is also a kind of grief caused by the grief of others, is not intended to be denied in a *Bhakta* by this Sutra. For example, see Prahlada's sympathy for the miseries of those who are immersed in *Samsara* as described in Bhagavatam VII:9, 43 and 44; "With my mind deeply immersed in the rare ambrosia of singing Thy glories, I have no fear of the *Vataraṇi* (the river of Hell) so difficult to cross. But I sympathise with those who, immersed in deep ignorance, bear this burden of *Samsara* for the sake of sense pleasures, and consequently have no inclination to seek after that ambrosia. Most sages intent upon their own release contemplate Thee in perfect

silence, but they do not think of the welfare of others. I do not seek for such release for myself leaving these helpless creatures to themselves. I do not see any other than Thyself to be able to protect them who are going astray." The same idea is illustrated by the self-sacrifice of Shibi, Jimutavahana and Dadhichi in our Puranas, and by the lives of Buddha and Christ.

5. *Free from hatred*.—As noted by Patanjali in II:8 of the *Yoga Sūtras*, hatred is always directed towards some object or person that causes pain or injury to oneself, and Vyasa, commenting upon the *Sūtra*, says that it is of the nature of anger to get rid of such offending object or person. Sankara also in commenting upon Gita III:37 remarks that it is obstructed desire that reappears in the guise of hatred and anger. Thus if *Kama* is desire to obtain pleasurable objects, *Dvesha* or hatred is desire to get rid of unpleasant or painful ones. So when a man is in a stage when there is no possibility of any desire or pain, he cannot be subject to hatred. Again, Bhagavatam XI:23, 51 to 56 says, "The body is the cause of pleasure or pain; the *Atman* has nothing to do with it; for it all concerns the gross and subtle bodies which are material in their nature. If one chances to bite one's tongue, with one's teeth, whom should one be angry with for causing that pain? If one limb of a person is struck by another limb, with whom should one be angry?" This is the attitude of the realised man who has become one with all creation. Moreover, to the *Bhaktas* everything happens only by the will of the Lord, and if, therefore, he hates any one, it will be equal to

hating God Himself. Hence to him everything that comes from his Beloved is only a token of His love, and as such is always welcome.

Here also absence of anger must be distinguished from that righteous indignation against the evils of society or against the oppressors of humanity, as for example, Sri Krishna's against Kamsa, Narakasura, etc., or Rama's against Ravana, Viradha, etc., or Jesus Christ's against the money changers inside the temple whom he whipped out, or Muhammad's against the oppressors of the devotees of the One God. Such indignation is not a manifestation of *Dvesha* (anger), and is not excluded under this *Sutra*. The same is the case with the real renunciation of a *Paramahansa* who is repelled by all that tends to cloud his vision of God.

6. *Does not rejoice over anything*.—Ordinarily one rejoices when some desire is satisfied or likelihood of pain is removed. This is relative joy arising from merit which is perishable in nature and is based on the ego of *Avidya* or ignorance. The true devotee overcomes joy and sorrow of this type. As Katha Upanishad II:12 says, "The wise man relinquishes both joy and sorrow, having realised that ancient Effulgent One." But this does not mean the devotee has no joy of an intermittent nature resulting from the transcendental experience of the Divine. As the *Vivekachudamani* 522 points out: "What wise man would discard that enjoyment of Supreme Bliss and revel in things unsubstantial? When the exceedingly charming moon is shining, who would wish to look at a painted moon?" The *Bhakta* is always immersed in this

higher joy where the ego is completely absent. As Plotinus says, "They are no more two but one; the soul is no more conscious of the body or mind, but knows she has what she desired, and that she is where no deception can come, and she would not exchange that bliss for all the heaven of heavens."

7. *Nor does he exert himself*.—

Generally a man exerts himself for gaining some desirable object or for getting rid of something undesirable. The *Bhakta* has no special desires of his own, nor does he wish to get rid of anything because everything is a manifestation of the Lord to him. So why should he exert himself? But this does not mean he is an idler or is insensitive like a stock or stone. The idea is the same as 'Sarvarambhāparityaga' of the Bhagavad Gita. Sri Sankara takes this latter word to denote one who gives up all activities prompted by desires that are meant for attaining some object, visible or invisible. The Gita makes it clear that even the realised man must work so long as he inhabits a body. The body and mind forms part of *Prakriti*, universal Nature, and obey the laws of *Prakriti*, and no amount of external force can divert the body and mind from obeying the laws of their being. The only difference between the realised man's activity and that of an ordinary man is that the one is not prompted by the ego, and hence is not affected by the consequences of attachment, like the other. *Vide Gita* III:25, 28, and 33. It is a common error to consider Sankara as an advocate of total inactivity. He only advocates complete freedom from the duties of a householder during the stage of *Sadhana* so as to prevent

distractions to *Samadhi*, and confines his objections against a realised man's activity, to those rites and ceremonies which are based on an ignorance of the true nature of the self. The Bhagavatam XI:7, 11 also says that what is absent in the realised man is egoistic action: "Beyond the reach of both merit and demerit, a realised man will, like a child, desist from prohibited actions but not through a sense of evil, and perform enjoined actions but not through an idea that it will conduce to merit." Thus we see all authorities are unanimous in considering that there is nothing contradictory in a realised man still living a dynamic life in the world. What Narada too means here is that a realised man cannot feel he is doing any

work, and that he cannot be expected to do work with selfish motives.

To sum up our discussion, the realised man, having transcended the ego, comes to have a type of non-attachment that is spontaneous, and not the result of any effort. He has no desire, except the desire to love the Lord and serve the world as His manifestation; he has no hatred except indignation against evil and unrighteousness. His happiness consists not in the relative joys of the world which are always concomitants of pain, but in the bliss of the Divine. And he does not exert to promote his own self-interest, but works for the good of all without any sense of ego or of any feeling of external compulsion.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Gateway of Understanding:** By Dr Carl A. Wickland, M.D. Published by National Psychological Institute, 6027, Hayes Avenue, Los Angeles, California. Pp. 313. Price \$3-50.

This is a very well-written and readable book on spiritism from the pen of one, who, from what we can understand from the perusal of the present writing, has been for a whole life-time engaged in research in the problem of discarnate spirits from a purely humanitarian point of view. Although one may not agree with the author in his claim that spiritism has opened a new gateway of understanding for man in contrast to the great religions of the world—for that is what is implied in his criticism of Christianity and other forms of religions—one has to admit that he has succeeded in making a clear case for the encouragement of research in spiritism. Generally speaking, spiritism and investigation into other forms of psychic phenomena are as yet in the hands of faddists. Hence these subjects have not yet

got due recognition as subjects worthy of serious study at the hand of scientific men in general, and Dr. Wickland brings to the reader's notice, with sufficient clarity and emphasis, the two important evil consequences of such an attitude, on the happiness of man in general.

The first of these is that it gives man a wrong outlook on life, and gives rise to a host of evil consequences following from it. Indeed Dr. Wickland is concerned more with its evil consequences in the post-mortem condition than on our present life. He points out that a man who faces death in the conviction that there is no hereafter fails to notice the change of his condition after he gives up the physical body. It is stated that death is generally followed, except in the case of well-trained souls, by a period of unconsciousness for three days. The soul is then not in the spirit world proper yet, but in an intermediary condition, hovering about the earth sphere. Now if, on waking up from that state of unconsciousness, it fails to recognise the change



of its condition, and remains in the conviction that it is still in the old body, it continues to live tormented by all its old bodily infirmities, and fails to make progress and reach the spirit world, which is its real goal after leaving the physical body.

Now this is a very serious matter, and if it is really so, it is in itself sufficient reason for the encouragement of spiritism. But we for our part feel that even without going into such occult depths, one can find sufficient justification for a scientific study of spiritism. If there is really a hereafter, a vivid perception of it alone can give us the right perspective even regarding the life we are at present in. In the past, religions used to give man this correct perspective by inculcating belief in the hereafter, but religions inculcate belief in the survival of personality either through dogmas, or through metaphysical arguments, or through a consideration of the experiences of mystic life. Rightly or wrongly, many a modern man fails to be convinced by conclusions arrived at by such speculative and subjective methods, and demands what he calls scientific proofs, *i.e.*, proofs obtained by applying the objective experimental methods of science. Now if spiritism can be put on a really scientific basis, it can restore the faith of such people in the deeper implications of man's earthly career and thereby lead to a revolution in their material, moral and spiritual life in general. To our mind this is the strongest reason why spiritism should be put on a scientific basis, and not allowed to be exploited by cunning people, or patronised exclusively by faddists and eccentrics.

To pass on to the second reason adduced by Dr. Wickland, he points out that the earth-bound spirits who fail to make progress in after-life due to their defective outlook get attracted to mortal sensitives, and becoming identified with their psychic being, convey their thoughts and general mentality to these individuals. The victims, unaware of the source of their impressions, may suffer physical agony corresponding to the disease from which the spirits had passed out. Dr. Wickland contends that many forms of physical and mental illness which defy all medical skill are due

to such obsessions, and permanent relief in such cases can be attained only by dislodging the spirits. Such dislodgment is not only in the interest of the patient but also of the spirit concerned, because the progress of the spirit also depends on its realising that it is no more endowed with a physical body, and that its home must now shift from the earth to the spirit world.

Now a theory of this kind, if true, is of utmost importance in treating man's physical and mental ailments, and just as the modern study of abnormal psychology has extended the field of medical science, so too may scientific research in spiritism lead to unexpected developments in the art of healing. Dr. Wickland advances as proof of his theory the many cures he has effected on the basis of this theory. About his method he says in brief : " Appropriate treatment of the patient through the use of static electricity, hydro-therapy and suggestion greatly facilitates the transfer of the spirit, or psychosis, to the properly developed psychic sensitive. By this method the investigator obtains direct contact with the interfering entities who are usually unaware of being spirits or of being then in possession of another person's body. Direct conversation can be had with them and much discussion may be necessary to bring these spirits to an understanding of their situation, which many are loath to recognise." In the cases treated by Dr. Wickland, his own wife served as the psychic sensitive. For forty years past Mrs. Wickland has been placing her physical organism at the disposal of patients who wished to be treated in this way. " Her mediumship is that of unconscious trance, induced by Intelligent, Invincible Co-Workers ; Her eyes are closed, and after waking, as if from a deep sleep, from three or four hours of trance, she is utterly unconscious of what has transpired, and, instead of being fatigued, feels refreshed." All these years she has worked in this way without any harm to herself, and Dr. Wickland contends that the proper type of person can have this immunity from injury, whoever he or she might be. The book contains the records of many conversations held with spirits that were thus attracted to Mrs. Wickland's body from others who were under treatment.

While Dr. Wickland's theory deserves careful consideration, there is every danger of its being stretched too far, and of credulous people developing a mentality that would ascribe every disease to spirits and substitute the witch-doctor for the man of medical profession. We for our part feel that it is a trace of such mentality that makes Dr. Wickland criticise the modern psychological theory of multiple personality, and question Dr. Morton Prince's analysis of the famous case of Miss Beauchamp in the study of dissociation of personality. In fact in his criticism Dr. Wickland forgets that Dr. Prince not only analysed Miss Beauchamp's personality, but also re-integrated it successfully without exorcising any obsessing spirit from her.

The same tendency to stretch the theory too far is seen when Dr. Wickland criticises the theory of re-incarnation as untrue. Besides several other arguments which to our mind appear hackneyed and unconvincing, he contends that the belief in re-incarnation makes myriads of spirits hover over the mortals in India, seeking for opportunities to become re-embodied, which they can never do, that this results in the very extensive prevalence of cases of obsession and possession in this country, and that the mental influx of myriad hosts of these earth-bound spirits is responsible for depressing the moral nature of India's inhabitants, filling their minds with hopeless despair and keeping them in a back-

ward condition. This is not the place to enter into an elaborate refutation of this theory. We need only remark that the greater susceptibility of Indians to possessions and obsessions is not substantiated by any statistics, and that Dr. Wickland forgets that when India was the leading country in the world several centuries back, belief in reincarnation was shared by cent per cent of her inhabitants, whereas to-day it is not accepted at least by one-third of them who are Muslims and Christians.

To our mind the sober attitude towards spiritism seems to be this: It is idle to expect it to supplant either medicine or religion. If all the reports of Dr. Wickland are true, it can no doubt be useful in the treatment of some diseases; but it is difficult to draw the line between real physical and mental diseases on the one hand, and cases of obsession on the other. In true spiritual matters, spiritism can never satisfy the higher aspiration of man for communion with the Divine, or help him in realising his Higher Self. On the contrary, there is every potential danger in it of developing a morbid and superstitious mentality and a sort of spirit phobia, in the same way as some people have got an exaggerated and imaginary fear of disease germs. But if put on real scientific basis, and approached in a truly scientific spirit, it may help many a rational mind just to turn towards the higher spiritual view of existence.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### OBITUARY

#### Swami Somananda

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the sad demise of Swami Somananda of Bangalore, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, on the 4th of October, at Madras. We note down the following facts about him on the basis of the information supplied by a close devotee of his.

He was born of a family that traces its ancestry to the great Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar Empire. As an undergraduate employed in the District Court of Bangalore City, he heard of Swami Viveka-

nanda and of his great achievement in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Ever since, he was eagerly looking for Swamiji's return to India. Later, he stayed for about a month with Swami Ramakrishnananda in Madras, and from there went to meet Swami Vivekananda who was then in Kashmir. He stayed with Swamiji till his Mahasamadhi in 1902.

In September 1904, Swami Somananda returned to Bangalore, and took his residence with a devotee at Ulsoor. From February 1911 till his last days, he was, for 26 years, giving religious instructions to Canarese and Telugu knowing inmates of

the Central Jail in Bangalore. In November 1922 he opened a temple named after Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda to minister to the spiritual and moral needs of released prisoners. Thus he embodied in his life the ideal of service by being the friend, instructor and consoler of a set of fallen people for whose welfare society cares very little, and many among them abandoned their evil ways under his influence. In 1934 he opened a night school for the children of labourers at the Bhuvanewari Mandir, an institution which he had started in 1911 in memory of Bhuvanewari Devi, the mother of Swami Vivekananda.

#### Swami Gnaneswarananda

By the premature death of Swami Jñaneswarananda, the head of the Vedanta Society of Chicago, U.S.A., is removed from the Ramakrishna Order a promising and outstanding figure who made an indelible mark in various fields of activity, and raised high hopes about him for the future.

Swami Jñaneswarananda, known in his early years as Satindra Nath Chakravarty, came of a well-to-do family belonging to the village of Sekharnagar in the Dacca District. His father, Babu Aswami Kumar Chakravarty, was a Superintendent of Post Offices. In 1914 Satindranath graduated from the Jagannath College, Dacca, and in the same year came in close touch with Swami Premananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. But even earlier he was known to the Ramakrishna Ashram at Dacca as an ardent young man who could be counted on for organizing all kinds of Mission activities. After his meeting with Swami Premananda and later with Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, his innate spiritual nature became impatient for a fuller expression. He joined the monastery at Dacca in 1917 as a disciple of Swami Brahmananda.

In the same year, he left for the Mission centre at Benares, where he spent some years and allowed himself to be moulded by the benign influence of Swami Turiya-

nanda and Swami Adbbutananda, both direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

After this thorough preparation, the Swami was called upon to organise an Ashrama at Patna. From 1922 to 1926 this pioneering work went on in the teeth of most adverse circumstances. In 1923 he organised a flood relief work in Patna and Arrah Districts, which endeared him to the people. Besides, by his devotional songs, inspiring lectures, elevating religious discourses and, above all, by his ready wit and geniality of character, he gathered round him a most devoted band of friends, admirers and enthusiastic workers, whose co-operation created a stir in the city, and the work bade fair to be well-established.

But in 1926 he was asked to undertake greater responsibilities at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur, where, however, he could stay only for a year. In 1927 he was deputed to preach Vedanta in America. He first joined the Vedanta Society of New York, and subsequently established a Vedanta Society in Chicago, Illinois, in 1930 where he worked till his last day, paying a short visit to India in 1934.

In America he was noted as a versatile teacher, who succeeded in impressing on the American public the true spirit of Indian religious and cultural ideas and ideals. He did not confine his activities to religious lectures, discourses, classes and interviews only. He gave lessons on Sanskrit and practical demonstrations of Indian art, life and music as well. His simple, deep and sympathetic exposition of the universal philosophy of life, his sociability and frankness and his intense faith in Indian culture drew round him an ever-increasing number of friends and admirers from the *élite* of the city.

After his return from India in 1934, overwork and absence of rest were telling upon his health slowly. He developed heart troubles, which brought about his sudden demise on the 14th of November last. His passing away is an irreparable loss not only to the Ramakrishna Order but also to his devoted students in Chicago.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

स्वधर्ममनुतिष्ठत्सु धैर्यादचलितेषु च । स्वर्गमार्गाभिगमेषु सत्त्वेषु निरता ह्यहम् (श्रीः) ॥  
सुसंमृष्टगृहाश्वासन् जितस्त्रीका हुताग्रयः । सन्तुष्टभृत्यसचिवाः कृतज्ञाः प्रियवादिनः ॥  
ययार्हमानार्थकरा हीनिषेवाः यतव्रताः । उपवासतपःशीला प्रतीता ब्रह्मवादिनः ॥  
नैनानभ्युदियात् सूर्यो नैवासात् प्रवेशयाः । अर्थे च रात्र्याः स्वपतां दिवा चास्वपतां तथा ॥  
कृपणानाश्वत्थानां दुर्धेलातुरयोषिताम् । दयां च संविभागं च नित्यमेवानुमोदताम् ॥  
श्रुतं विषण्णमुद्विग्नं भयार्ते व्याधिपीडितम् । हृत्स्वं व्यसनार्ते च नित्यमाश्रवासयन्ति ते ॥  
नेकोऽश्नन्ति सुसम्पन्नं न गच्छन्ति परस्त्रियम् । सर्वभूतेष्ववर्तन्त यथात्मनि दयां प्रति ॥  
नित्यं दानं तथा दाक्ष्यं आर्जवं चैव नित्यदा । उत्साहोऽयानहंकारः परमं सौहृदं क्षमा ॥  
नैवाकाशे न पशुषु नायोनौ न च पर्वसु । इन्द्रियस्य विसर्गं ते रोचयन्ति क्रदाच न ॥

Persons aspiring to be favoured by Shree, the goddess of prosperity, beauty and love, should perform their life's duties with unshaken fortitude, joyfully setting their steps on the heavenward path. Their homes are to be immaculately clean and their servants and helpers heartily satisfied. They should themselves be grateful for every good turn ; never uxorious ; regularly worshipping the Deity in the holy fire ; sweet and obliging in address ; taking up only works fit and proper ; gifted with the sense of shame ; self-controlled by means of solemn vows ; undergoing fasts and austerities ; continuously cheerful ; mindful of scriptural studies ; waking up before sunrise and not lounging in bed at morning hours ; sleeping only half the night and never at day ; habitually happy in showing kindness to distressed, helpless, aged, weak and sick fellow-beings as well as to womankind in general ; ever ready to console the alarmed, the cheerless, the anxious, the terrified, the diseased, the deprived and the afflicted ; averse to partake singly savoury dishes, never knowing others' women ; regarding others with deep love as they would themselves ; permanently disposed to charity ; and skilful, upright, persevering, forgiving, perfectly friendly, shorn of all arrogance, and never indulging in debauchery.

Mahabharata : Santi Parva, Chapter 235.

## THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

[This is the month in which the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's birthday falls. In memory of it we give in the following paragraphs a brief exposition of the principles of Indian nationalism which Swami Vivekananda placed before his countrymen a few decades ago.]

### I

**I**T may be of considerable interest in these days of national awakening to consider in brief the theory of nationalism propounded by Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest of India's national leaders in modern times. Under the state of affairs obtaining at present in our country, we are accustomed to equate a national leader with a leader of a political party or with one who has distinguished himself by fighting the Government and by courting jail and sufferings of various kinds. Swami Vivekananda was not, however, the leader of any political party, nor had he led any political agitation. Yet in the evolution of Indian nationalism Swami Vivekananda occupies a very important place. For the occasion when the Swami appeared before the Indian public was the first time when anything like national enthusiasm manifested itself in considerable volume in India ever since she had lost her political freedom a century back. In all the big cities that the Swami visited after his return from the West, crowds, unprecedented in the histories of these cities, gathered to listen to the Swami's addresses. At the present day we are accustomed to mammoth meetings held in open air in connection with the visits of well-known political leaders; but in those days such things were unknown, and except for some important Government functions and

for religious festivals, any gathering that could be called huge was practically very rare in India. That the Swami could for the first time evoke an enthusiasm of such a magnitude without the help of any all-India organisation or planned propaganda, shows positively that there was in the personality and message of the Swami something that had a startling appeal to the conscience of India. There was no doubt a strong religious strain in this appeal, but there was something more in it. Very large sections of people who were attracted to the meetings that the Swami addressed were not perhaps much interested in the philosophical doctrines expounded by him, but they felt that he stood for something of much wider interest than abstract philosophies.

If we would enquire into what this wider interest was, we would be led to the spirit of nationalism that the Swami represented. Before the Swami's time many an Indian had gone to the West; but all of them had gone there to learn, to admire everything that was of the West, and to come back and tell their countrymen that they were a worthless lot and that their only hope lay in following the footsteps of the West. Our educated men, who had been educated into this state of mind, watched with wonder the fortunes of this strange young monk in the West, and were surprised to see how he contradicted all their pre-con-

ceived notions by his example. For he went to the West not to learn but to teach, and his teachings were listened to with respect by large numbers of cultured men belonging to that very race which dominated India politically and whose cultural domination too educated India was gradually learning to accept. In the very centres of Western civilisation they found him declaring quite fearlessly, and with the conviction of a prophet, how India had plenty to teach the West, and how India alone, of all nations in the world, could do this particular work. It was in fact this bold stand that the Swami took, the courage with which he declared a truth which no one till his time was bold enough to declare, that created a stir wherever he went, and roused the sleeping Indian nation to a state of self-consciousness once more. And it is on the basis of this—his re-assertion of India's cultural self-respect—that the claim of Swami Vivekananda to be one of the greatest national leaders of modern India rests.

## II

The Swami pointed out to his countrymen that India is one of the greatest historical puzzles. She is the only country in the world that has survived the test of millenniums. There were civilisations other than her own—the cultures of her contemporaries in the past—that thrived vigorously for some length of time, founded huge empires, organised powerful armies, carried on extensive trade, and also spread the light of culture in the surrounding areas. Such were the civilisations of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But these civilisations, whose glory depended mainly on their military strength,

have disappeared from the face of the earth after having lived a vigorous national life for a few centuries at the most. But quite different has been the case with India. She had never been a conquering country, but was on the other hand invaded several times by powerful foreign armies. But through all the vicissitudes of her history she has preserved the integrity of her culture. The same Vedas are honoured to-day as they were done three or four thousand years ago. The same Upanishads that came out of the minds of the ancient Aryan Rishis continue to satisfy the spiritual aspirations of the noblest minds of this country. In social organisation, in rules of domestic life, in the systems of law followed, in the matter of literary traditions—in fact in every field of life we find the same ideals followed, as in the hoary past, and wherever there have been changes, even sweeping, in the application of these to details of life, there is preserved the distinct continuity of tradition. In other words, if the Vedic Rishis came to India to-day and studied the kind of culture prevailing in the country at present, they would, at their first contact with it, recognise it to be in the direct descent of the culture which they themselves had created a few thousands of years ago.

Swami Vivekananda points to this unique historical fact again and again, and asks the Indian nationalist to ponder over its significance. In Nature nothing is allowed to survive when it has ceased to fulfil any useful function. When a body ages it dies. So a culture, too, when it has thrived for some length of time, degenerates and perishes. In fact the vitality of a culture depends on what it has got to contribute positively to the develop-

ment of mankind as a whole. When it has lost all its creativeness, and self-indulgence has become the only function of the nation or nations representing it, then Nature wipes off that culture from the face of the earth, handing down whatever useful contributions it has made, to new people who are better fitted to promote human welfare. According to the Swami, this fact that India has lived through these thousands of years, and yet retains her vitality, is a positive evidence showing that, unlike her contemporaries of the past, who are only memories at the present day, she has yet got to make great contributions to the collective life of mankind.

### III

As to what that contribution is, the Swami ascertains from the study of India's past. Every nation, according to him, stands for some particular idea or ideal, and its national life centres round that ideal. In some countries it may be politics, in others social reform, and in still others industrial organisation. The life of a nation is at its greatest vitality when the people and their leaders remain faithful to their particular ideal, and the nation declines in proportion to its incapacity to keep that ideal bright and remain true to it. To illustrate this point the Swami often refers to the story of the ogre who could not be killed because his opponent did not know that his life resided not in his body, but in a bird that lived on the branch of a certain tree. Unless that bird were killed, the ogre could not be killed. So too in the case of a nation, its life lies in its particular national ideal, and the furtherance or hindrance of its destiny in life depends on the integrity with which that ideal is preserved.

The ideal round which India's national life is organised is religion. In other countries too people have religion, but it is only one of the many concerns—and that too only a minor concern—of life. But here in India all branches of culture have centred round the conception of man's spiritual destiny, and our individual and collective life have been organised in such a way that it is conducive to the production of the highest type of spiritual men. Our great leaders of the past, whose memory still remains green in the nation's mind, are incarnations and saints like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya and others. Even in her recent history, India has been producing mystics and saints of the highest type, the like of whom are not to be seen in countries that occupy the highest position in the political and industrial life of the modern world. In spite of the condition of backwardness in education and industrial life, the Indian people show a keen appreciation of true religious spirit and a capacity to recognise men of spiritual genius.

The Indian nationalist, if he really desires to serve the nation, must remember this fact clearly in mind. Rightly or wrongly, the people of India have, through the strenuous efforts of centuries, developed a particular bent of mind suited for actualising spiritual ideals. India's strength in the past lay in that, and the contribution she has made to the general good of mankind has also chiefly been in the spiritual field. Whenever any powerful race, Persian, Greek, Roman or whoever else it might be, built a mighty empire, knit the highways of the world and brought distant countries into mutual communication, then India always came out of her aloof-

ness, and deluged the world with the spiritual ideas which she had been conserving in the bosom of her national culture.

To forget this particular bent of India's mind, her national ideal, and reconstruct her collective life on ideas of political greatness or military achievements, will be as vain as it will be disastrous, according to the Swami. It is impossible to drive the Ganges back to its source after it has traced its way up to the ocean, and even if this impossible task is attempted, the consequences are only bound to be disastrous. So too the momentum which the nation has gained through the work of centuries cannot be thwarted, and any attempt in that direction is bound to have only repercussions of a very injurious type. In fact India has made the selection of her function in the collective life of mankind in the distant past, and that consists in contributing to the spiritual enlightenment of mankind. That choice cannot now be nullified. And after all it is not a bad choice. To give the life-giving waters of spirituality to the nations of the world, to direct their thought from ephemeral concerns like conquest, empires, money-making, etc., to the eternal verities of life, to speak unto men with the strength of conviction about the existence of God, about the nature of the soul and about the ways of realising our highest spiritual destiny—this is not in any way a mean and ignoble function.

And the way in which India discharged this function in the past brings credit to her name. All other nations have spread their culture in the world with the help of the sword and their military strength. Every idea they contributed to the world had to be soaked in the blood of millions before

it could find general acceptance. But India on the other hand has always inculcated her ideas in a spirit of peace and goodwill to all. Her influence has always been like the gentle dew falling unnoticed but bringing the fairest roses into blossom. She lives to-day after weathering the storm of millenniums because hers has been the most glorious contribution to the good of humanity, and this contribution has been made without robbing others of their land and without shedding their innocent blood.

The Swami is certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that in the modern world too India is bound to play the same role as in the past. In the British Empire, in the English language and in the modern methods of communication the Swami sees that interlinking of the world which has always been the occasion for India to broadcast her spiritual ideas to the world at large. The Vedanta philosophy of India is according to the Swami the highest achievement of man in the quest after God, and to his mind it is the only system of religious thought that can stand the test of reason and science, without applying which the modern mind is not in a mood to accept any religious system. With her natural aptitude for understanding and realising spiritual ideals, and with her familiarity with this wonderful philosophical tradition of Vedanta, India is the land fitted in every way to satisfy the spiritual hankering of man at the present time.

The Swami is convinced that India's future is closely interlinked with the degree to which she remains faithful to her spiritual ideal, and the earnestness with which she prepares herself to fulfil the great work of ministering to the spiritual needs of



men. To those who ascribe India's downfall in the political and economic field to her pre-occupation with religion and spiritual ideals, the Swami would say that her downfall was not due to religion but due to a misunderstanding and misapplication of it. To set right that religious back-bone of the nation is the only way of remedying her ailments in all fields of life. The Indian patriot should inculcate healthy political ideas and new ways of social organisation to the Indian masses through religion and not by disparaging it. It is no doubt true that politically and economically India is a down-trodden country, and it is very essential that immediate attention should be bestowed to better her condition in these respects. But an improvement of her political and economic conditions are necessary for India not because the attainment of the premier position in these respects is to be her highest aim, but only because sufficient food to eat and a sense of national self-respect are essential as conditions required for developing the higher faculties of the mind. To forget this, and to love politics and economics in themselves, to make the attainment of the dominant position in these fields as the be-all and end-all of our national life, is, according to the Swami, the surest way to bring India to her ruin. For then she would have violated her cherished national ideal, proved unfaithful to the mission entrusted to her, and there would be no useful purpose to be served by her in the collective life of humanity. The result will be that, like the civilisations of the past which have been swept away from the face of the earth because they made material prosperity and success their highest aim in life and thus became in course

of time unfit to contribute anything useful and constructive to human welfare, Indian culture too will vanish from the face of the earth and become a mere memory for antiquarians of the future to busy themselves with.

#### IV

Such were the principles of Indian nationalism which Swami Vivekananda championed. It would be seen that there is in it no reference to present-day politics, nor to any form of national hatred to which professional politicians generally appeal in their nationalistic propaganda. This may appear a weakness in the Swami's nationalism, and many impetuous patriots of to-day, caught as they are in the economic and political struggle with the powers that hold them down, and they may therefore be tempted to ignore his message as something unworthy of attention. But there is one point which such minds ought to bear in mind. A healthy and enduring nationalistic spirit cannot be built on hatred. One may for a time rouse the people's political passions by creating an intense hatred in their minds for those whom they consider their oppressors, rivals or enemies in worldly struggles. But suppose India gains political freedom. How is the patriotic spirit of a healthy type to be sustained afterwards. In many an independent country the nationalist politicians in the past, and even to-day, manage to keep the people's enthusiasm at a high tension by creating hatred of their neighbours, or by inculcating that immoral land-hunger that goes under the name of imperialism. Or as some politicians prefer to do to-day, they may preach the doctrine of class war, heap hatred upon hatred, provoke reprisals

worse than what they inflict, and ultimately bring about a state of affairs in which no one has any liberty of speech or even of thought, and every one thirsts for the blood of his neighbour.

In contrast to this ephemeral and disastrous type of nationalism, stands the glorious, eternal gospel of nationalism that Swami Vivekananda preached. To-day India may think that political struggle and economic reorganisation should form the essence of her nationalistic policy, but a day shall

come, after she has been comparatively relieved of her difficulties in these respects, when she shall look for a more enduring basis than passing hatred for the organisation of her national enthusiasm, and then she shall see the light she is searching for, in the eternal mission of India as the spiritual teacher of mankind—in the inspiring and elevating spiritual nationalism of India which Swami Vivekananda preached so eloquently.

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## HALF AN HOUR WITH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*By Prof. K. S. Ghosh, M.A.*

[Mr. Ghosh is the retired professor of Philosophy, of the Hazaribagh College. The incidents he narrates reveal an important trait in the character of Swami Vivekananda.]

**A**T the request of the Editor of *The Vedanta Kesari*, I venture with hesitation to relate an incident of my life which I have kept to myself now for about 40 years. To be precise, except a short notice published by the well-known poetess, Mrs. Kamini Roy, in the now defunct Bengali monthly, the *Navyabharat*, I do not think the incident has found a place in any public journal.

At this advanced age of mine, the diffidence of my early youth may be got over, and this momentary episode in the life of Swami Vivekananda may have its place in public print to show that he could be great even in small matters and that he could behave like a simple child of nature with school boys. These lines are jotted down in the hope that as full a narrative as my memory would now permit may be of interest to those who are eager to know all about the great Swamiji.

The art of writing biography in this country is still in its infancy. Many good biographies have been written on some of our worthies. We come across in them a record of their achievements, but human touches, even of their failings which give colour and flavour to their earthly lives, are in many cases conspicuous by their absence. This incident may be of interest to the readers of this journal as showing an interesting human side of the great Swamiji.

I was a student of the Matriculation class of Baidyanath Deogarh High School in 1898. Once in the month of November of that year our Headmaster, the late lamented Kavibhushan Jogindra Nath Bose, the biographer of our poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, told us that Swami Vivekananda of the Chicago-Parliament-of-Religions fame had come to the town for a change of weather. The Swamiji,

said our Headmaster, was a classmate of his and if any of his boys cared to see this remarkable man, that was the time.

The great impression that Vivekananda made at the Parliament of Religions in America in 1893 produced quite a sensation in this country and considerably enhanced the self-respect of our people. This reputation of an Indian monk reached us, the veritable striplings in schools, and filled us with pride. The words Vedānta, the Gita and Advaitavada, reached our ears, but their significance was beyond our comprehension. The thought that Swami Vivekananda had no time to waste with school boys did not deter us. My friend Satish Ch. Mazumdar, now of the India Government Secretariate, and I made up our minds to take our chance and wended our way in an afternoon towards the hill stream Durwa which forms the western boundary of the beautiful town of Deogarh in Santhal Parganas. Swamiji had taken up his residence in a house near by, lent to him by one of his Calcutta disciples.

With palpitating hearts, we entered the compound of the house and enquired of a man who looked like a helper in the household about Swamiji's whereabouts. He silently pointed out to a majestic figure clad in a yellow robe which slowly emerged out of the western side of the house, with an umbrella in hand. We had no difficulty in knowing who it was, took up courage, approached with hasty steps and stooped low to touch the feet of Swamiji, for verily it was he. But he quickly stepped back and did not allow us to touch his feet and inquired who we were and what was the object of our visit.

We told him that we belonged to the local High School and came to pay him our respects. He asked us to follow him and stepped into the public road in front of the house, leading to the stream Durwa. We felt proud to have the Swamiji all to ourselves and the privilege of being able to have a quiet walk with him.

The house was situated in a most beautiful quarter of the town. A well-laid road crossed the hill stream Durwa at a distance of half a mile from the place and traversed a high ridge beyond it and then disappeared in the midst of yonder hills. It was a lovely early winter afternoon; the sky was beautifully clear and the distant range of mountains clad in charming vegetation stood overlooking the plains below.

While we slowly walked with the Swamiji, he seemed to be troubled with hard breathing. On inquiry he replied he was not keeping good health and came to rest for a few days in that health resort.

He thought his heart was sound, there seemed to be some trouble with his lungs. We came with the idea that the moment the Swamiji would get an opportunity he would talk to us on the Vedānta philosophy. But we tried in vain to draw him out in that direction. He seemed to follow St. Paul and wanted to be all things unto all men. He reserved his Vedānta for those that were fit for it; he talked of health, hygiene and sanitation to us, a couple of representatives of thousands of our school boys who are ruining health over their studies, mis-called education. He turned his eyes towards a distant range of hills that stood majestically against the western horizon and inquired whether we

had ever been to them. He expressed surprise at our answer that we had not the good fortune to go so far as yet. He then pointed out the utility of making long excursions occasionally for the benefit of our health, and told us that one of the best ways of utilising Sunday noons was to take some refreshments with us, spend the whole day in communion with Nature on chosen spots in yonder hills and to come back refreshed in the evening.

He enquired about our studies and the dietary arrangement in the hostels, and, hearing that we took some amount of ghee regularly, told us, with a characteristic emphasis on the word 'indigestible', not to take ghee overmuch because it is indigestible and it is better to take butter instead. It now appears from a distance of time that his sojourns to the Western world must have convinced him that butter is more useful as an article of food than ghee, which is of much use in this country. Scarcely one out of ten healthy men in this country who are not used to western mode of living would care to take butter in preference to ghee.

In the course of conversation, when he came to learn that we belonged to Eastern Bengal, he told us that he had been to our parts of the country years ago and found people take sufficient quantity of good fish as an article of food. This was all to the good. Common facts of life and living which escaped the notice of the ordinary Sannyasin had interest for him if it had anything to do with individual health and well-being.

After talking in this strain for a while, we reached the hill stream Durwa. Stopping on its bank for some time, we retraced our steps.

While we walked silently we noticed that continuous talk made him tired and the deep breathing caused a discomfort. We realised to some extent that a mighty spirit was struggling with a physical frame that bore the impetuosity of a strenuous youth and was bending under it. But we did not know that it was to give way at no distant future and to liberate the spirit that could not be shut up within its confines.

Many thoughts childlike or serious were coursing through our youthful minds that seemed to be already under the fascination of a great soul. We enquired whether he was going to deliver any public discourses at the station and whether we could come to him occasionally. He replied to the effect that he was asked to take complete rest by his medical advisers and the period of his stay in the town was uncertain.

But Swamiji now once stood in the middle of the road and we stopped with him not knowing the reason why. He stood, a stately figure his physical weakness notwithstanding, just before me, looking curiously to the spot where my feet lay. In fact he found fault with the way in which the latches of my shoes were tied, having both the ends of each latchet turned one way. He asked me to have them properly tied. Born and bred up in an out-of-the-way Eastern Bengal town, I failed to take the hint thus conveyed. I turned to my shoes, but could not detect the cause of Swamiji's uneasiness. His concern over the matter seemed to me to be inexplicable. His subtle perception of fitness of things in the matter of ordinary gear, showed not simply the keenness of his observation, but a high sense of propriety of the modern art

of living. My friends have never complimented me with the neatness of my dress. At times indifference to these matters may have degenerated into slovenliness. But in the present instance my fault was that, though I had put on a new pair of shoes on this auspicious occasion, instead of tying the latches keeping the ends turned to opposite directions as the general custom is, they were turned in one way. This did not escape the notice of the keen-witted, clear-sighted Swamiji. I stood still before him, almost stupified, not knowing what to do. He asked me to have them tied properly. This added further to my embarrassment. He then pointed one of his fingers to my shoes. This made the confusion worse confounded. Finding me irresponsible, he stooped low and blurted out, 'Well, let me have it.' This made me mechanically put forward my right leg towards the Swamiji; in a couple of seconds he tied the latchet properly keeping the two ends in two opposite directions and asked me to set right the other one. The whole behaviour seemed to be so natural and so strange, so instantaneous yet so significant, that sense seemed to be knocked out of me for the time being, and I failed to act up to his request. This makes me uneasy even at this distance of time at the thought that I failed at the moment to rise up to his expectation. A city-bred lad could have easily adapted himself to the situation, and would have gained approbation of the Swamiji. Not knowing the disease, I could not take to Swamiji's suggested remedy. Fortunately for myself he could easily understand that I got nervous and did not press the matter further. My wits returning to myself I atoned for my unconscious and seeming disobe-

dience, by trying to touch his feet, but he stepped back and did not allow me to take the dust of his feet in the orthodox Hindu fashion. The great Swamiji to touch the latchet of the shoe of an obscure schoolboy—what a great humanity and humility! How many educated men and women both here and abroad would have considered themselves fortunate to have the privilege of touching his feet. This utter self-forgetfulness on his part was so charming and so noble and compassionate that the matter needs no further comment. This momentary episode raised him immeasurably in our estimation and made his sacred name dear to us for life. Time came to bid him good-bye and we tried in vain for the third time to touch his feet.

We came back to the hostel after dark—the story got speedily circulated in our student world, and streams of friends came out to examine the latchet which was sanctified by the touch of the Swamiji; they would not allow me to untie the latchet and take off the shoes. This was however done late at night not without some misgivings and with heavy heart. The day has passed away, but its memory still clings to me and will do so as long as I live. The episode has revealed to me Swamiji's deep humanity and childlike simplicity that only a great man of his calibre could possess. While harbouring great thoughts in his mind and planning great schemes for social amelioration, he knew how to love children, lowly and simple folk *Trinaad api suneechena*.

We saw him for the second and last time a few days after in a railway compartment at the Deogarh station, by the side of Srijut Girishchandra Ghosh, the celebrated dramatist, on

their way back to Calcutta. Swamiji was then dressed in what looked like his travelling gear,—in half pants and coats, smoking tobacco in his pipe in the right Indian fashion, and chewing betel nut and pan. An ordinary Sannyasin would hesitate to come out in this way in public lest he might offend orthodox sentiments. But no Sannyasin had a scantier respect for social conventions than the Swamiji. This was a source of his strength and also the cause of his unpopularity with a certain section of his own people. He was indifferent to both as a Nishkama Karmi.

One thought more. Emerson has somewhere related the story of a nun who was reported to have performed miracles near Rome. This made the then Pope uneasy. His Holiness

deputed St. Philip of Neri to report on the matter. St. Philip went to the Convent where the nun was staying and sought permission of the Head for an interview with her. This was granted. He waited in a room for the nun and on her arrival put his dusty and heavy pair of boots on a chair near by and requested the nun to take them off his feet. The nun got offended and turned away. St. Philip left the room in a moment and came running to the Pope and re-assured His Holiness there was no cause of apprehension. The nun was not humble and there can be no miracle where there is no humility.

Yes, the source of Swami Vivekananda's almost miraculous powers was in the hidden humility of his

## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN INDIA

*By Sir Francis Younghusband*

In the following article, reprinted from *The New York Times Magazine* for September 26, 1937, Sir Francis Younghusband gives the impressions he gathered during his visit to India in March last, regarding the religious awakening in this country.]

### I

**I**NDIA for thousands of years has been a fountain-spring of spirituality. Perhaps it is the influence of the Himalayas upon its people drawing their souls up to unbelievable heights. May be it is the onward sweeping grandeur of its deep-flowing rivers. Perhaps it is the climate making possible the sweeter intimacy of life lived close to fellow-men and beasts and birds and trees and flowers in open-air brightness. Whatever may be the cause, the Indians have always had a special aptitude for closing with the essential spirit of things. They

have been particularly sensitive to the imprint of the surrounding world upon them. And they have been keenly responsive to that impress and eager to express it so that all may know of the joy which it has brought them.

And, while this special capacity for appreciating and enjoying the things of the spirit is always latent in Indians, there are times when they are particularly impressionable and bursting to express their impression. The present is such a time. There is in India a veritable spate of spirituality. Not for centuries have Indians been so spiritually alive.

Public attention is mostly directed to political events ; the new constitution is what is most talked of. And when "improvement" is referred to, what is usually meant is such material improvements as the extension of railways and irrigation canals, the construction of better roads, the erection of more factories, the use of more motor cars. But these are mere surface trivialities in comparison with that uprush of spirituality which is now pouring itself over the land. Not only in the sphere of religion but also in the sphere of art wonderful personalities, like Rabindranath Tagore and Iqbal in poetry, and Abanindranath Tagore in painting and Dilip Roy in music, are appearing all over India. A true renaissance is now in progress.

## II

In the sphere of religion the great souls have to be sought out. Indians in this respect are very reserved. Like a flower, an Indian saint may produce the honey but those who would partake of it must come to him. The two most deeply religious Indians of to-day live in far retirement. One, Arabindo Ghose, though sufficiently versed in English culture to have been able as a young man to pass the very difficult examination for the Indian Civil Service, lives in almost unbroken seclusion in Pondicherry. And Ramana Maharshi, made known to Western readers by Paul Brunton, lives a most retired life in Southern India. These will probably not be appreciated to the full till after their deaths.

But for the last year there has been celebrated the centenary of the birth of one who in his lifetime lived a similarly retired life, known only to a very few. This was Ramakrishna.

And now that since his death in 1882 his disciples have made his life and work known throughout the world, we can better understand these great religious personalities and realise what their spiritual awakening in India actually is. We can see what it means to Indians. And we can form our own opinions of its worth.

## III

Ramakrishna's parents were very poor and he was born in a mud hut in an ordinary Bengal village. But he was of the Brahmin caste and therefore had centuries of spiritual culture ingrained in him. And he was, even for an Indian, of a particularly sensitive disposition. When he was quite a boy, the sight of a flight of cranes against a dark cloud sent him into a trance.

Besides the impressionability he had an exceptional capacity for entering into the life and thoughts and feelings of others. He loved acting. Once when acting the part of a divine hero in a sacred play, he so entered into his part that again he passed into a trance. He was thus quick to receive impressions. He could live the lives of others and think their thoughts.

The one absorbing passion of this most sensitive creature was to 'realise God'. He was brought up in the traditional belief that the world was governed by God, and in those conversations, which, as a boy, he eagerly sought with itinerant holy men passing through his village, he learned of the joys of realising God. He therefore madly yearned to have this experience. He would so purify his whole self that it would be sensitive to the most delicate impressions which might be made upon it by God—by the Almighty Spirit of the Universe

which he had been taught was working through him as through all about him. And he would so enter into the spirit of the universe that he would be filled with it to more than the saturation point.

These efforts to attain the highest spiritual experience succeeded. By devoting his whole life to this one end, by deliberately searching for the holiest persons and profiting by their experience and by undertaking prescribed spiritual exercises, he rendered himself so sensitive that even the sound of men chanting the Holy Name would send him into a trance.

In this state of Samadhi, as it is called by Indians, he would experience bliss untellable. The 'realisation' or experience of God would make him swoon with delight. He would long to be ever with God. He would yearn to bring all others to him. And those who came near Ramakrishna told of an attraction which drew them to him again and again.

#### IV

Indeed, of such a sympathetic nature was Ramakrishna that he could feel with the followers of all religions. He was a Hindu of the Hindus and he remained a Hindu to the end. But for him Hinduism was not the one and only true religion. If each man followed his own religion through to the end, he also would find God; he also would enjoy the same experience which Ramakrishna had known. All religions lead to God, he said. And by personal experience he had tested the truth of this assertion.

For some time he had lived the life of a Christian. At another time he lived as a Moslem. Through both ways he had reached God. By his practice and teaching he had there-

fore promoted the harmony of religions. This was his great contribution to the world. And the revitalizing of India was his contribution to his own country. He put new life into the dry bones of Hinduism.

This new life was very evident in the culminating act of the centenary celebrations of Ramakrishna's birth—the Parliament of Religions recently held in Calcutta. It was not exactly a parliament, as there was no discussion. It was more a series of meetings at which addresses were delivered by followers of different religions. But the point was that these addresses did arouse real interest.

I was invited to attend the Congress and had the honour of presiding at one of the sessions. And what I particularly noticed were the earnestness and patient attention with which the huge audiences, morning and evening, listened to the speakers. For the speeches varied much in quality and no one who was not in dead earnest could have sat through many of them.

#### V

As compensation, however, at every session there was at least one really striking address. Some holy man whose saffron robes showed that he had devoted his whole life to religion would in his own language, with concentrated fire of energy, drive home his point and rouse the enthusiasm of the meeting. Or, again, some Indian of distinction, like Rabindranath Tagore, would deliver an address in the most polished English and excite the loud admiration of the audience. And over all the meetings there was a refreshing informality, un-self-consciousness and good humor. People were there to enjoy themselves—to



enjoy a feast of the spirit. And quite evidently they went away with their expectation fulfilled.

In the week following the parliament, sacred plays were performed in a gigantic tent holding at least 3,000 persons. All were seated on the ground, the men on one side, the women on the other. The stage was merely a dais about three feet high, set in the middle of the audience, and there was no 'scenery.' Here, again, what was noticeable was the keen, rapt and reverential attitude of the audience. The tent was packed to capacity and crowds outside were trying to peep through. And in the plays themselves what was remarkable besides the first-rate acting was the occasional humor of even the most sacred characters—even of Krishna; he was human all through, as well as divine.

The appeal of Ramakrishna to modern India was again evident in the final act of the celebrations, a festival in which from 150,000 to 200,000 people must have taken part. Men, women and children, by road, on foot, on bicycles, in motor buses, and by river in steamers and in country boats, all day long from every direction streamed towards Belur Math, the monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission.

## VI

In the great tent, around the big portrait of Ramakrishna, a most beautiful flower garden had been arranged, and all, as they entered, paid obeisance to the saint. In the centre of the tent a Kirtan, a sacred dance with singing, was performed. And in all parts of the grounds little village parties were holding their own Kirtans—dancing and singing with the most

burning religious fervour. Joy was apparent everywhere. If the sessions of the Parliament, presided over as they were by some of the most intellectual men in India, had shown that Ramakrishna had appealed to the most conservative cultured men in India, this festival was a sure sign that he had no less touched the hearts of the ordinary village folk.

I have dwelt particularly on the life and ideas of Ramakrishna because we are now at about the right focal distance to view them in their true perspective. But during his lifetime, he was hardly known beyond a small circle, and there may be in existence to-day a no less spiritual genius.

In Calcutta alone many Indians came to me with descriptions of living saints, each with his own following. Some told me, for instance, of a girl saint with wonderful powers of divining the inner essence of men and things. Her whole being, I was told, had been illuminated by contact with the Spirit of God. A celestial radiance emanated from her. And her composure and sweet smile carried away the worries of all who approached her.

As it was in Bengal so was it also in Southern, Western and Upper India. Everywhere one heard of some special genius who had arisen. And what was noticeable was that the followers of each were keen to claim their leader as the one and only and superior to every other leader. Probably the leaders themselves were far too humble to make any such claim. Certainly Ramakrishna never did. All he was anxious for was that others should experience the joy which he himself had known.

## VII

When my visit to India ended, what then was my impression of present happenings there? Those impressions are probably different from what a Pope of Rome would have if he were to visit India. A viceroy might have a still different view. In now giving mine I do not claim for it any absolute truth. Still less would I wish to impose it on any single person. I only give it as a personal impression in the hope that it may help others to come to their own conclusions. And I had this advantage, that I was born in India and had spent over a quarter of a century in official and personal dealings with Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems.

I found that the great effort everywhere was to 'realise God'—to get in touch with whatever might be the central motive power of the universe, the fundamental source of all being. Very varied were the experiences of different individuals who had made this effort, but all agreed in this, that 'realization of God' resulted in a joy which was well-nigh unbearable—in an ecstasy of rapture beyond all expressions. And all yearned to share with others the joy which they had experienced and which in their view was of more worth than all the rest of life put together.

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But I came quite definitely to the conclusion that, like bees in search of honey in the flowers, we must go to them and not expect them to come to us. Indians do indeed come to lecture in Europe and America. But it is not their natural way of communication and we do not see them at their best on a public platform. It is not thus that they can impart what is most precious. If we want that precious thing, we must go to them.

## VIII

And it is worth going to them at the present time, for the revitalizing and spiritualizing of India are of value to the whole world. We Westerners may have to put away our airs of superiority and recognise that, if India has much to learn from us in the way of scientific progress, mechanical inventions, big business and the art of government, we have much to learn from her in just those things of the spirit which we sadly need to possess. We may learn from Indian spiritual leaders that balanced yet intense inner activity, that blend of unruffled composure with tremendous energy, and that capacity for appreciating and enjoying the very highest forms of happiness of which the organisers of the Ramakrishna celebrations furnished such valuable practical examples.

# CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*By A Devotee*

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life-time he had travelled extensively all over India, and was responsible for the quickening of the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of Sannyasin and householder devotees of his, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

**I**T was the day of the full moon. With gentle steps evening was descending on the earth. All noise and bustle had subsided. In the far away temples the conch and the bell were being sounded for the evening service. In the monastery also, the auspicious sound of the conch had announced the call to evening prayers. The monks and the devotees were going to the Shrine, their gait expressive of their spirit of devotion and reverential attitude. Sri Mahapurushji also went to the Shrine as usual. Prostrating before the Master with great devotion, he took his seat on a deer-skin in the south-eastern corner of the room. He was seated in deep meditation with his hands folded and his eyes steadfast. The ceremony of waving the lights had begun. The calm, deep music of the evening service was leading the mind of the devotees towards concentration; especially the serene appearance of Mahapurushji was drawing everybody's mind more inward. By and by the service was over. All who were assembled began to sing in unison the song in praise of Sri Ramakrishna. Mahapurushji also joined his sweet voice with that of the rest, and sang in an absorbed mood. After the song was over, prostrating before Sri Ramakrishna one by one, many began to go away to their respective places

for meditation and other duties. With his eyes closed, Mahapurushji again became absorbed in meditation. His face became radiant with the sublime glow of Samadhi. This state lasted for a pretty long time.

At about 8-30 p.m., Mahapurushji was coming back to his room. A song which he was humming to himself almost inaudibly was expressing the joy of his heart; the voice was very sweet and full of love. A few monks and devotees desiring to meet him were awaiting his return. After Mahapurushji had taken his seat in his room, all of them made respectful prostrations before him and took their seats. The room was almost silent as if none desired to talk. After the silence was broken, there began a conversation on spiritual practices.

In a self-absorbed mood, Mahapurushji said, "Night is the best time for spiritual practices. Meditation and Japa (repetition of God's name) should be done every day with great steadiness; for that purifies the mind. If meditation and Japa are done with steadfastness for some time, a Godward disposition will be permanently awakened in one's mind, and one can get a taste of the Divine bliss. One should not go away leaving one's seat immediately after meditation, as that would not render the spiritual mood

strong. After meditation it is better for one to reflect on the subject of one's meditation for some time at least, keeping to the same seat. After that, one should read some select devotional hymns or such other pieces that are favourable to contemplation. The contemplative mood and the Divine joy become deeper and continue for a longer time by that. Even after leaving one's seat, one should be revolving about God in one's own mind, without entering into conversation with anybody. As a result one feels as if that exhilarating mood of meditation is still persisting. This not only brings great delight in one's heart, but also greatly helps one to live inspired with high thoughts."

A monk : Maharaj, is it not necessary on our part to go out now and then for the practice of austerities and spiritual exercises ? Would it not be favourable to the life of the monk to wander in various places and holy spots as a pilgrim or an itinerant ascetic ?

Mahapurushji : My boy, in ordinary parlance they say, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Can mere gadding abroad bring religious merit or the realisation of God ? However, it is good sometimes to subsist on Madhukari Bhiksha\* or live in a solitary place without any arrangement for support or to travel from place to place for some period, in order to destroy one's egotism and arrogance, or to cultivate complete reliance upon the Lord.

Undoubtedly spiritual welfare results from that. But there is no use

of doing so year after year continually. Swami Adbhutananda used to say at times, "Where will you go wandering about ? If you are a child of Sri Ramakrishna, stay in one place." This is rightly said. One who finds Him here, finds Him outside also. Where shall you wander about and why ? He is already in our heart. It is indeed because of this that the Master used to sing almost daily, "Oh, my mind, abide within yourself ; never go under anybody else's roof. Whatever you want, you shall get seated here alone ; only you make a search in your inner chambers. That supreme Treasure is the philosopher's stone, capable of giving you whatever you want. Many a jewel lies scattered at the door of the dancing room of that Chintamani (wish-yielding gem)."

Mahapurushji sang this song in his sweet voice again and again. After a brief silence he continued, "Towards the end of the song is taught a great truth about God that many a jewel lies scattered at the door of the dancing room of Chintamani. Everything lies at Her door—enjoyment, freedom, even knowledge of Brahman. My boy, but then you have to search after and ask for it with great eagerness. This search itself is what is called spiritual practice. She bestows Her grace as soon as one prays to Her sincerely. And if out of Her grace She opens the door a little and awakens the Kundalini (latent Divine power), you can perceive that everything exists inside. But if one fails to receive Her grace and Kundalini is not awakened, then nothing will be gained."

A devotee : Yes, Swami Brahmanandaji also used to say that the door to the Knowledge of Brahman will be

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\* Cooked food, sufficient for one, received by monks from several houses as alms, as a honeybee (Madhukara) gets nectar from various flowers without harming them.

opened as soon as the Kundalini awakens at the Mooladhara and ascends through the path of the Sushumna (spinal column).

Mahapurushji : It is exactly so. If the Kundalini does not become awakened, nothing can be realised. It is for this reason that the Master used to pray to the Mother, with copious tears in his eyes, "Mother, wake up ! Mother, wake up ! O Mother Kundalini, wake up !"

Reciting the first line, Mahapurushji himself went on singing the song, "Oh Mother Kundalini, wake up. You are of the nature of the Eternal Bliss, you are of the nature of Divine beatitude (Brahmanandam) and are residing as a sleeping serpent in the lotus of Moolaadhaara (lowest Yogic centre) On the triangle (of the Chakra of Manipoora) the fire burns, and your body has become heated. Consort of Siva, the enclosure of the self-existing Siva, you give up the Moolaadhaara. Make your way through the path of Sushumna, and rising to view in Svadhishthana, be in movement through Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. Giver of Satchidananda, being united with Supreme Siva in the thousand-petalled lotus in the head, you have your wonderful play." Oh, what a self-absorption ! It cannot be expressed in words. Thrice Mahapurushji sang the song and gradually assumed silence. His face became illumined with a calm sweetness ; the room was pervaded by the spirit of the song amidst the silence that prevailed all round. A considerable time elapsed

in this state. Mahapurushji then uttered repeatedly, in a plaintive tone, "Mother, Mother, Mother of the Universe," as if a child that had lost the mother were crying. Slowly he regained his ordinary mood and said in a low voice, "Numberless are the days I have heard this very song from the lips of the Master. On certain days he would sing this song while fanning the Mother with chowry in his hand. With what self-absorption he would sing the song ! We would all be at a standstill. He would lose his physical consciousness. The chowry would move slowly and he would sing in his ecstasy. And what a sweet voice he had ! It is difficult to make you understand that spiritual state. Everyone's heart would melt completely. Could the mother be but awakened at such earnest prayers ? And that Mother has become Brahma-Kundalini. Swami Vivekananda used to say, 'Don't you know that the Cosmic Kundalini Herself has awakened this time ?' She at whose wish creation, preservation and destruction of this universe take place, that Mahamaya, the Cosmic Kundalini, has become awakened at the prayer of the Master. What is there to wonder in that the Kundalini lodged in each one will become awakened ? That is the very reason why there is a great awakening throughout the world. And that Primal Energy has, in a sportive mood, manifested itself through the body of Sri Ramakrishna for the good of the world. And now what cause is there for anxiety ?"

# THE ETHICAL SIDE OF SPINOZA'S PHILOSOPHY

By Prof. Sheo Narayan Lal Shrivatsava, M.A.

Professor Shrivatsava of the Hitakarini City College of Jabulpore brings out below the ethical implications of the doctrine of 'degrees' in the revelation of Reality advocated in Spinoza's system of thought. It may be noted with interest that this doctrine equally answers the objections raised against all other parallel systems in which Divine immanence and the theory of nescience play the central role.]

**S**PINOZA's theory of reality seems *prima facie* to leave no scope for ethics. In his metaphysics there seems to be no place for such a thing as the attainment of an Ideal or Perfect Life ; for, according to Spinoza's theory of reality, 'good' and 'bad', 'perfect' and 'imperfect' have reference only to *our* partial apprehension and do not express the nature of things *pre se*. Reality throughout its infinite variety of forms is governed by an immanent necessity, and its manifestations are what they ever can be, and cannot be otherwise. Natural effects follow inevitably from their efficient causes. Every natural product is necessarily all that it is capable of being. What it has not in comparison with other things is a want only when viewed from *our* limited perspective, and does not belong to the essential nature of the thing. In and for themselves, things are neither good nor bad, perfect nor imperfect, but necessarily what they ought to be. 'Good' and 'bad' are terms relative to us.

Such a view seems to rule out altogether the idea of an Ideal Good or Perfection to be sought for by man and to be eventually attained by him.

But, there is a deeper strand in Spinoza's philosophy which makes ethics significant and the ethical endeavour the supreme felicity of human existence. Spinoza recognises an

ethical standard of good and bad on the basis of his doctrine of 'degrees' of expressing Reality. That doctrine runs thus : Although all things are equally real, being equally dependent on God, yet all things do not express the nature of God (the Reality) to the same extent or in the same degree. We have a progressively higher manifestation of Divine nature as we ascend the scale of being from the earth and stone through plants and animals to man. Man expresses the nature of God more than trees and stones. Further, man's manifestation of the nature of God is in direct proportion to his appropriation in himself of thought or reason which is the very essence of divine nature. In thinking, man realises himself in God whose essential nature is thought or intelligence. Intelligence is the distinguishing characteristic of man which marks him out from all other creations of nature ; and the highest end is realised when his intelligence attains its fullest development, that is, when God thinks in man or when man becomes conscious of himself and of all things *in union with God*. This is the highest moral ideal to be attained by man. From this point of view, we can speak of a 'good' and a 'bad' for man. Whatever helps man to approximate to this moral ideal is good, whatever hinders its realisation is bad. The difference be-

tween the good and the evil man is the difference between their levels of dependence upon God and their powers of expressing the divine nature. All things strive to express their own essential natures ; so does man. This striving to express one's essential nature is the basis of morality. The essential nature of man is intelligence or reason. Man approaches his moral ideal in proportion as he manifests reason in himself. In fact, man is *himself* only when he acts rationally.

The life of reason is the life of the free man. To follow 'passion' is slavery. The man who is impelled by passions does not act from his free choice, but is passively subject to external forces. The subjection to passions arises in Spinoza's view, from an inadequate apprehension of them or from not having a clear and distinct knowledge of them. "An emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion, as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof." The more we clearly apprehend an emotion, the more it comes under our control, and the less passive is the mind in respect to it.

We can have a clear and distinct conception of all our bodily modifi-

cations ; and emotions being nothing but ideas of the modifications of bodies, we can have clear conceptions of them. By having a clear and distinct knowledge of the emotions we should learn to dissociate them from their external causes and associate them with the idea of God. When emotions are cut off from their connections with external causes, they cannot exist.

But the adequate knowledge of things implies the knowledge of God, for without God nothing can be or be conceived. God is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the entire knowable reality as much as He is the *ratio essendi* of entire existence. Therefore to know God is the highest virtue of man. It is essential for every rational man to know the eternal and infinite essence of God and this is the common goal of all mankind. The knowledge of God is the crowning fulfilment of man's ethical life.

The true religious life in Spinoza's view consists in the performance of actions originating from the knowledge of God. Ethical life comes to its highest fruition when God is seen in all things and all things are seen in God.

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# THE SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE OF Fr. LALLEMANT

*By Wolfram H. Koch.*

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch friend of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its saints and mystics. In the present study the reader is afforded a glimpse of the character and teachings of Father Louis Lallemant, the French Mystic. The life and message of this and other mystics of Europe only go to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence stand for the same God and the same spiritual ideal.]

“Ledich van ons selven ; wi : Goeds vri-eigen ; God : onse eigen ”.

(Freed from ourselves we become the unlimited property of God ; God becomes our very own)—Jan van Ruysbroeck.

**W**HEN taking up the Spiritual Doctrine (*La Doctrine Spirituelle*) of Louis Lallemant, the French mystic, one is principally struck by two things—on the one hand by the poverty and weakness of the philosophy propounded therein, which (in common with many of the orthodox Christian teachings) shows a very crude and materialistic conception of the miracles, resurrection of the dead and salvation, and on the other hand by the deep sympathy and knowledge revealed therein, of the practical training required for spiritual life, without which none can hope to attain to union or communion with God. Knowing full well that spiritual life will ever remain an idle dream for all those who cling to their worldly attachments and affections, and who thus do not follow Christ's advice, “First make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean”, Lallemant stresses the preliminaries of spiritual life again and again, showing the innumerable pitfalls and temptations that may obstruct the path of the aspirant.

As Sri Ramakrishna has said, there are mistakes in all religions although everybody thinks his religion is true and unfailing. So let us not dwell on what seems to us to be poor and dogmatic in his work, but on that which is true and helpful for all times. Although Christ Himself has taught His true followers the necessity and secret of non-attachment in many ways, the world—and above all that part of the world which professes to be Christian—does not care to listen to such sound advice, and rather looks for some easier and more comfortable interpretation of His sayings. Such was not the interpretative teachings of Father Louis Lallemant. In all his works there is a strain very much akin to that of Christ when He says, “Call none your father upon earth : for One is your father Who is in heaven”, a teaching which is so much forgotten in our present-day world, writhing in agony as it is in the clutches of countless self-created forms of attachment, and even idealising any and every attachment to kith and kin, or tribe into sacred duty. For Louis Lallemant human duty means service to



God, which may take many forms, it is true, and may find many expressions, but which can never be degraded into the service of individual or collective selfish interests in the name of some far-away God for Whom all such 'dutiful' servants do not really care in the very depths of their hearts.

Voices like that of Louis Lallemant come down to us through the ages calling us back to truer values of life and to real human duty which eternally stands above and beyond the realm of all those valuations given to life by the machine-bound and thought-mechanizing age in which we live.

Forgetting the unchangeable background of life without which life becomes senseless, man has degraded himself into the slavery of his own creation, the machine, and is now whirled headlong towards destruction by the very forces he has made into his God.

When Father Louis Lallemant says, "We are so full of greed and illusion and so little on our guard against the deluding charms of creatures and of the created that we deceive ourselves ceaselessly", he gives expression to an eternal truth which all the great seers and prophets of mankind have recognised and taught in many ways and in many languages. More than ever "woman and gold", as Sri Ramakrishna used to call those two great enemies of man, go on leading the world to a mad dance of destruction and hallucination. So in those sainer and quieter moments, when the enthralling charm of these two is broken, we should try to turn to the words of men who themselves came to know something of the truth of life and thereby 'opped being lifeless puppets

in the hands of forces which man lets loose on himself when he loses his true manhood and clutches at the phantoms called up by his feverish brain.

There is a passage in the Spiritual Doctrine, reminding us of the words of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, of which it is almost a literal repetition. Louis Lallemant says, "In the beginning Divine things seem to be insipid, so that one has great pains to enjoy them. But afterwards they become sweet and so much to one's liking that one enjoys them with pleasure and comes to have nothing but disgust for the rest. Whereas the things of the world are delightful and flattering to our senses and highly pleasing in the beginning, but in the end nothing but bitterness is found in them."

Our world, to-day perhaps more than ever, has entangled itself in the mere appearance of things, overrating the glory of power and intellectual knowledge, and after having enjoyed for a short time the dazzling glamour of these, it is just beginning to feel the bitterness they always bring in their train till man awakes from his intoxication and again installs the eternal value of life in their rightful domains.

Father Louis Lallemant was born in the year 1578, the son of the bailiff of the country of Vertus, at Chalons-sur-Marne and was sent by his father at an early age to the College of the Jesuit Fathers at Bourges. From his very childhood he had a great horror of vice and impurity and had a very high conception of the service of God, cherishing the inner life more than all worldly prospects. He professed in Paris on October 28th, 1621.

It was one of his greatest maxims that one progresses in perfection only

to the extent one has progressed in purity of heart, saying again and again that this was the shortest and surest way by which to arrive at Divine Union, and the one infallible means to prepare oneself properly for the great communications of God. And he applied himself more than to anything else to the practice of keeping his soul pure, without any stain, never allowing it to become soiled by ever so little, by watching ceaselessly over his interior and over all the movements of his heart and mind. Besides this he had a great love for poverty and never permitted himself to possess more than was absolutely necessary.

His greatest pleasure was to have intimate converse with God at the time of his prayers, giving to contemplation and the practice of recollection more time than to anything else. Nothing touched or affected him except the love and the interest of God. His mind was continually busy with discovering the wishes and aims of God and to execute them as soon as he came to know God's will, whatever troubles and privations this might cost him.

His life was a blessing for many young souls whom he helped over the first difficulties in the spiritual path and to whom his guiding hand was that of a father's. He died on the 5th April 1635 at the age of 57 years, twenty-nine of which he had passed in the Jesuit Order.

In the 'Doctrine Spirituelle' Louis Lallemant describes in beautiful words the ordinary condition of the human heart which always feels, as it does, some supreme dissatisfaction and which always tries to remedy it by filling itself with some transient form or affection that deserts it again

and again. The motive-force of happiness is deeply laid in every human being and, as such, he is right. It even serves to show us that we are meant to be happy and free and loving, and that love is meant to be unchanging, but only through many a bitter experience in the course of its various lives does the human soul come to recognise its folly and begin to turn towards that which knows no decay and has been waiting within it from time immemorial. Although the doctrinal background of Lallemant's words is naturally that of the Roman Catholic Church, which means taking the soul's descent to earth as happening but once, yet the truth he proclaims in them is not tied down to any dogma and can be taken as a guide by all.

He says :—

#### HOW THE VOID IN THE HUMAN HEART IS TO BE FILLED

"God is the king of the hearts and of the inner life. The other kings have but power over the possessions and over the bodies of their subjects. They can only govern the interior by the exterior. Their empire does not extend to their hearts. Of these God alone has reserved for Himself the dominion. and He is so jealous of it that He does not wish to share this dominion with any creature. All our affections must be subjected to this law, and we owe Him the tribute of all the movements of our heart."

"We have in our heart a void which no creature can fill. It can be filled only by God, who is our beginning and our end. The possession of God fills this void and makes us happy. The privation of God leaves us in this void and makes us unhappy."

"Before God fills this void, He puts us in the path of Faith. And on

condition that we always look upon Him as our ultimate goal, making use of the creatures with moderation and bringing the use we make of them only to the service of God, contributing faithfully to the glory He wishes to draw from all created beings. He will give Himself to us so as to fill our void and to render us happy. But if we be lacking in faithfulness, He will leave us in this void which, when not filled, will be the cause of our greatest misery."

"The creatures want to take the place of our ultimate goal, and we ourselves are the first to desire to be our own end. Some creature says, 'Come to me, for I shall fill thee.' We believe him. We are deceived. Then comes another and again another who speaks the same language to us and deceives us in the very same way, and this goes on as long as our life lasts. On all sides creatures call us, promising to satisfy us, but all their promises are nothing but lies. In spite of that we are always ready to allow ourselves to be deceived by them. It is as if the bed of the sea were empty, and someone just took a little water in his hand to fill it. Thus we are never content, for the creatures, if we attach ourselves to them, drag us away from God and throw us into the element of pain, trouble and misery, which are qualities as inseparable from creatures as joy, peace and happiness are inseparable from God."

"Beyond the Incarnation we must no longer admire anything. It is dangerous to give our admiration to the creatures. Only God Incarnate deserves this. To admire something belonging to the natural order shows how small is the virtue that we possess."

"For two reasons we cannot find in the creatures that joy and that peace which are the fruits of the Holy Ghost. In the first place because the possession of God alone strengthens us against troubles and fears whereas that of the creatures causes us a thousand anxieties and apprehensions. Whoever possesses God is not troubled by anything, for God is his all in all, and all the rest has become naught to him. In the second place, because not one of the created things can suffice or satisfy us fully. Empty the sea of its waters and then go and put there one drop of water. Will you fill therewith that immense void? If God created an infinitude of beings, of greater and greater perfection, they all put together could not fill our soul, for it has a void which can only be filled by God."

"Only God has the right of sovereignty over our hearts, neither the secular powers, nor even the Church Herself, can ever extend their dominion so far. Our perfection and happiness consist in subjecting our heart to this kingdom of God. There is none but God who can satisfy it, for the heart has a void which can be filled only by God and by no one else."

#### THE PURIFICATION OF THE HEART

"We must direct all our care to the purification of our heart, for there lies the root of all our troubles."

"We are so full of wrong notions and erroneous judgments, of inordinate affections, passions and malice that we would be ashamed if we but saw ourselves as we really are. Let us imagine a muddy well, from which water is being incessantly drawn. In the beginning that which is drawn is almost all mud, but by continuing to

draw, the well becomes more and more purified and the water clearer, so that finally that which is drawn is perfectly crystalline. Similarly purifying our soul without ceasing, the bottom is gradually revealed, and God manifests there powerful and miraculous effects which He works in the soul and through it for the welfare of others. When the heart is well purified, God fills the soul and all its powers, memory, understanding and will with His Holy Presence and with His Love. Thus the purity of the heart leads to Divine Union, which cannot be reached by any other paths. To make ourselves like unto God we must needs renounce the likeness of the devil which consists in pride, in vanity, in presumption, and that of the animal which consists in the passions and in the disorderly movements of the sensual appetite."

"Every vice produces four evil effects in the soul; (1) it darkens and blinds it; (2) it soils it; (3) it troubles and inconveniences it; (4) it weakens it. But among these vices that which particularly blinds the mind is pride, and that which particularly soils the heart is voluptuousness."

"To have stifled in one's heart the movement of one single passion or one irregular inclination, to have torn from one's soul one single imperfection, such things signify a greater gain than acquiring the possession of a hundred-thousand worlds for eternity. And even had we not gained anything else by working the whole day like porters, but to free ourselves from one useless thought, we should esteem ourselves more than rewarded for our pains."

"Ordinarily we carry in our soul certain things which spoil our whole

interior. It may be some inordinate affection, some plan or some desire for a certain place or employment or charge. We must apply ourselves to attain complete indifference and not to seek anything but to possess God in this very life, so that everything else may become indifferent to us!

"A soul that by mortification has well cured itself of its passions and which through purity of heart has become established in perfect health, enters into an admirable knowledge of God and discovers things of such grandeur that it can no longer act through the senses."

#### THE EVIL EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENTS AND PASSIONS

"In the worldly-minded person passion extinguishes the light of faith and reason. Inordinate affection corrupts judgment, and makes him afterwards fall into the greatest disorder. The attachment to pleasure has corrupted, judgment to such a degree that no light is left but for that. Vanity, sensuality and the attachment to our petty comforts extinguish in us those lights which make us see the evil which lies in such faults. We deride as scrupulous those who by great subtlety of conscience follow a different conduct. And so as to flatter ourselves in our blindness, we palliate by a thousand fine pretexts the passion which blinds us. We lay claim to good intentions and after that we just pass over all the movements of grace within us."

"The ruin of souls is produced by the multiplication of venial sins which cause the diminution of Divine Light and Inspiration, of grace and inner consolation, of true fervour and courage to resist the attacks of the enemy. From that follow blindness,

weakness, frequent falls, bad habits and insensibility ; for our affection once drawn aside, we sin without having any feeling for our sins."

" Those who scrupulously avoid venal sins, generally feel deep devotion and have in their souls a moral certitude that they are in a state of grace. On the contrary, those who permit themselves to commit without any scruple venal sins, no longer feel the elevation of true piety, and the Holy Ghost does not give them any assurance that they are in grace."

" So long as we are subject to our passions and inordinate affections, we are the slaves of the evil one who gives them their motive power, very much like the organist does to the keys he touches. He awakens the memory of objects and the phantoms of evil imaginations and then presents the idea in a way which is capable of exciting the particular passion he wishes to bring into play. And if we are not on our guard, he generally succeeds in his intention."

" But the worldly-minded, who are in perpetual servitude, do not even aspire to freedom. They love their chains, and, as Job says, find their delights among the brambles and thorns which tear them. Concupiscence and passions insensibly put out those infused supernatural lights of understanding and in the end succeed in killing them completely. That is why one comes across eminent minds which are nevertheless very blind regarding spiritual matters. There are people who have very good eyes, but this does not mean that they are very intelligent. Thus in matters regarding perfection all disorders begin with some passion or some inordinate affection for some object. It gradually de-

bauches the understanding, till this finally allows itself to be caught and henceforth only judges in favour of the passion of which it is being warned. One looks at some object or at some employment which one finds attractive and which has great splendour. Passion is stirred. One desires this employment. First the understanding, illumined by the light of grace, resists this desire and condemns it ; but as the passion goes on increasing in strength and the light of grace becomes gradually extinguished, the understanding no longer offers any resistance. It succumbs to the irregular inclinations of will. It approves of them. It finds reasons for their justification, and wholly corrupted by will, it, in its turn, helps in corrupting the same, giving it false maxims by which to authorise its irregularities."

" We are by nature disposed to let ourselves be charmed by the splendour of honour, by the applause and estimation of men and by the glamour of pleasure and the satisfaction of the senses, because we allow grace but little sway over our mind. It is for the same reason that if someone says a word about our faults, we cannot bear Him. He will awaken in our heart countless movements of fury, grief, bitterness and impatience."

#### THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

" Let us try to approach God without ceasing, to bind ourselves to Him through our thoughts and through our love, and to give room to nothing which might distract us therefrom, except to actions done in His service, for which one must leave everything, even prayer and communion with God."

"As soon as we find some void in our occupations, let us turn usefully to God within us or to Jesus Christ, in order to kindle anew in us our devotion. From this will result that our mind, being always occupied in some saintly way, will not give entrance neither to vices nor to useless riches, and it will become noble and venerable to itself and to others, breathing a continual fragrance of saintliness."

"Let us trust in God who is faithful and never fails those who, having given themselves completely to Him, do but seek to please Him in all things."

May the voices of the great mystics of the East and of the West help in calling the present-day world back to truer ways of life and in making it realize that the deeper problems of life can never be solved by any 'ism' nor by selfishness, be it individual or collective, and that neither baseless dogmas nor any doctrinal bias can be made the starting point for a true solution of them, being as they are but another and even more noxious form of the human ego and its craving for power. The glorification of 'I and Mine' in all the fields of life, individual, social, national and religious, leads man hopelessly astray into the bottomless morass of ruthlessness and brute force, and throws him into deeper and deeper darkness and misery. This fact was well-known to the ancient seers of India. So they sang:—

"When a man gives himself up to wrong ideas, his mind enters the sinful way. His own actions are soon tainted, and he is flung into deep woe. But striving habitually after the good, with faith, self-control and courage, men progress to greater and greater

felicity. There are certain persons among us who do not make righteousness the principle of life. They are like chaff in the grains and like flies among birds. Whoever he may be, man cannot escape the effect of his prior actions; he cannot outrun it" (Mahabharata).

At a time when all valuations of life are thrown mercilessly into the crucible, let us learn to listen again to these dispassionate voices of old and to turn inward so as to make ourselves fit to receive the light of truth with our whole being and act up to it according to the best of our power.

Let us pray from the very depths of our heart with the Venerable Louis of Blois :—"O Lord, Thou torrent of priceless treasures, draw myself to Thee, and make me hurry to the sweet fragrance of Thy perfumes with inextinguishable fervour. Give me the grace to love Thee with all my heart and from the very depths of my soul, because it is Thou who lovest me first. May my tenderness for Thee, O only and highest Good, be a blazing furnace! May my whole soul be consumed! May it be absorbed by the great sweetness of Thy Love and become intimately united with Thee for Thine own eternal glory. O Dear Beloved, deign to prepare for Thyself a pleasant and delightful habitation within me. Give me a pure and upright heart, free from attachments and detached from the representations and images of creatures, free, tranquil, serene, limpid! O Sweet Light, loveable Light, infinitely beautiful, illumine me with Thy rays, penetrate into me, satiate me for the sake of the glory of Thy Name!"

## SCIENTIST AND SEER

*By Sister Devamata*

[Sister Devamata of Ananda Ashrama, California is well-known to the readers of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The limitation of the objective method of science and the need for the gift of insight for understanding Nature both internal and external, form the theme of her present article.]

**S**CIENCE in the nineteenth century moved forward on the level. It grew in breadth rather than in height. It had a "horizontal outlook", to borrow the expression of the eminent psychologist, C. C. Jung. With the 20th century has come a radical reorganisation of the scientific platform. The mechanical, materialistic view-point is breaking down, and to-day so great a physicist as Sir James Jeans can write: "The law and order which we find in the universe are most easily described—and also, I think, most easily explained—in the language of Idealism." And again: "... The physicist of to-day must needs have some acquaintance with ideas which used to be considered the exclusive preserve of metaphysics."

In his recent book, "The New Background of Science," Jeans seems to draw close to the theory of created things propounded by the early Indo-Aryan Sages of the Forest Books or Upanishads. The approach is, I believe, unintentional and unconscious but it is as if scientist and Seer clasped hands across the centuries. Those ancient Seers had no well-equipped laboratories, they offered no empirical proofs, yet they arrived at the same conclusions as those reached by observation and experiment in the laboratories of today. It was because they possessed an instrument more finely-tempered, more penetrating, than any

made of steel; one that disclosed more than prism, lens, test-tube, or mathematical formula could reveal;—the instrument of the human consciousness, raised to the highest point of efficiency in the superconscious state, the state of subjective vision.

By means of this, Indo-Aryan Seers were able to pierce the shifting clouds of material phenomena and perceive the causal realm behind. Viewed from this lofty height, the universe appeared to them evasive and ever-changing. The more they studied it, the more illusory it became, the more it seemed to escape them. Gradually, out of their subjective researches, they built up the Theory of Maya which has remained ever since one of the fundamentals of Indo-Aryan philosophy.

The theory of Maya declares that in the created world there is no absolute reality, no absolute existence, all existence is relative. Objects exist and are known only in relation to other objects; and this knowledge is necessarily impermanent, because each object varies according to the object to which it is related. It is small in relation to a larger object, large in relation to a smaller one, blue in relation to one colour, purple in relation to another. Thus all knowledge of material things must be shifting.

Modern science has come to a similar conclusion. The further it goes

in its investigation, the more it questions, the more it is forced to recognise its inability to touch Reality. "A scientific hypothesis," writes Sir James Jeans, "does not attempt to portray the reality of Nature, but only what we see of Nature. It may reproduce all the phenomena within our cognisance with perfect fidelity, and yet may differ from reality in the essence just as much as a photographic print differs from a living face."

In the light of Western science the entire phenomenal universe appears to hang in the balance. The only definite point seems to be the mathematical equation. Distance, ether, the constitution of heavenly bodies, even space and time, are under indictment. They may or may not have any real existence. F. H. Bradley, in his "Appearance and Reality," speaks thus of the problem: "We either do not know what space means and if so, certainly we cannot say that it is more than appearance." "Time is not real as such, and it proclaims its unreality by its inconsistent attempt to be an adjective of the time-less. It is an appearance which belongs to a higher character in which its special quality is merged. Its own temporal nature does not there cease wholly to exist but is thoroughly transmuted. It is counterbalanced and, as such, lost within an all-inclusive harmony.... It is there, but blended into a whole which we cannot realise." And Jeans writes:—

"True time implies the existence of a body at rest in space. Not only have we no means of discovering when a body is at rest in space, but there is every reason to suppose the phrase is meaningless. On these grounds, Einstein maintained that all time is "local"; there are as many

local times as there are planets, or stars, moving through space, and none of them is more fundamental than any other. This implies that it is just as impossible to locate an event in time in an objective way, as to locate an object in space in an objective way."

It is an interesting fact that in the Homeric poems there is no word for either time or space.

The objective method of research falls short in this, it dismembers the object it would study. It breaks up the atom or molecule to learn its nature. Sir James Jeans, with that scientific fairness which characterises all his writings, acknowledges this. He says: "Trying to observe the inner workings of an atom is like plucking off the wings of a butterfly to see how it flies..... Each observation destroys the bit of the universe observed." The result is that the physical scientist deals with a dead rather than with a living world; the living remains an enigma to him; and he comes to the conclusion expressed by Jeans, "That the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible."

The Seer, on the other hand, concerns himself less with phenomena, and more with causes. He strikes deep into the heart of things and discerns their nature and purpose. His findings are more fundamental, but they are also more essentially individual. He cannot take his fellow-searchers into the laboratory and by experiment prove his statements. They rest solely on his own word. This is why subjective investigations seem unscientific to the objective scientist; but, in reality, both objective and



subjective researches rest upon the same groundwork of proof—a consensus of findings. If a number of seers in the same state of consciousness perceive the same thing, we infer it is true; just as we lend credence to a postulate of material science when it is confirmed by the observations of many different scientists.

It may be claimed that the mental equipment required for the subjective method is so highly specialised that it is available to the few only. Not many can attain the state of concentration necessary to its application. When, however, we consider the accuracy, the tireless patience, the long vigiles, and the discerning vision demanded for outer observation and experiment, it would seem that the ob-

jective method calls for an equally specialised equipment. It was told me by one who knew, that when Thomas Edison was at work on a new problem, he spent long hours in deep reflection—so deep that his meal would be brought, left and carried away again and he would know nothing of it.

In the final analysis, every scientist must be a seer, if he would penetrate beneath the surface and observe Nature at work. And every seer must be a scientist, if he would share the fruit of his researches with others. Nature does not confide her secrets casually. She reveals them to that one alone, whose purpose is single, whose spirit is undaunted and whose life is dedicated to truth.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and lover of God—a Jnani and a Bhakta in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

The description of the realised man is continued further in this Sutra also. It is pointed out that no particular standard or uniformity of behaviour and conduct can possibly be expected of a realised man. Having surrendered his whole being completely to the Lord, and having merged his individuality in Him, the Bhakta is not conscious of doing anything of his own accord. He feels that like a dry leaf at the mercy of the wind, he is made use of by the Lord Himself as His instrument to carry out His inscrutable purpose in this world. So

far as the Bhakta himself is concerned, he is always immersed in the bliss of Self-realisation. To all external appearance, however, he may sometimes behave just like any ordinary man, scrupulously discharging all the duties pertaining to his station in life, and thus set an example to men of lower spiritual evolution than himself. Often times, however, he may even be seen to break all accepted code of conventional social morality and rules of propriety, so as to break the chain that clogs the wheels of progress, and become thus liable to

be scorned and criticised by the conservatively-minded. At other times he may appear to be inactive, being immersed in the bliss of Samadhi, and appear dead to his surroundings like stock or stone. Thus Narada wants us to understand how difficult it is to judge from a man's external behaviour whether he is a realised man or not, as some of our modern behaviourists would advocate. Even when he is active externally, he is internally calm and quiet, so that he may be said to be an extraordinary combination of calmness and activity at the same

यत् ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मा-  
गमो भवति ॥ ६ ॥

यत् which ज्ञात्वा knowing (पुमान् man)  
मतः intoxicated (इव as if) भवति  
becomes स्तब्धः paralysed or fasci-  
nated (इव as if) भवति becomes (यतः  
because) आत्मागमः one who always  
enjoys the bliss of Atman भवति  
becomes.

Knowing<sup>1</sup> that,<sup>2</sup> man becomes  
intoxicated<sup>3</sup> and fascinated,<sup>4</sup>  
as it were, because he is com-  
pletely immersed in the enjoy-  
ment of the bliss of the Higher  
Self.<sup>5</sup>

*Notes*—1. *Knowing*. As in the  
last Sutra, note here also the change  
of the verb used (Jnatva, i.e., know-  
ing), and the consequent transition  
from the idea of attainment to the idea  
of knowing. It is meant to suggest  
that spiritual realisation is not really  
an attainment of something external  
to the aspirant, a status or power or a  
different world like heaven or  
Brahmaloka. It is not something pro-  
duced as a result of action, whether

in the nature of external rites and  
ceremonies or internal meditation,  
severally or in combination. It is only  
a recognition or realisation of man's  
real status, his own inherent nature,  
the truth behind the phenomena,  
which is always self-existent and self-  
effulgent but was obstructed by ignor-  
ance and egotism. Both spiritual  
practice and grace of God referred to  
in the previous two Sūtras are requir-  
ed only for removal of obstructions.  
Had spiritual realisation been other-  
wise, it would never be permanent, as  
it is the law of Nature that every-  
thing that comes into existence in time  
must inevitably pass away into obli-  
vion also.

There is again a subtle suggestion  
that there is no real distinction be-  
tween Bhakti and Jnana in their high-  
er reaches, just as the radii of a circle,  
however divergent they may be to-  
wards the circumference, must inevit-  
ably meet at the centre. The differ-  
ences in nomenclature are based only  
on the differences in the methods of  
approach and consequent differences  
in expression in life. In the highest  
stage of realisation they are the same.  
Thus in Gita VII:17, the Lord des-  
cribes the Jnani (knowing one) as  
Ekabhakti (one whose devotion is  
centred in one). Again in Gita XVIII:  
55, it is said, "In the stage of highest  
devotion (Bhaktya), he knows Me,  
knows what in truth I am and who I  
am." It may, however, be objected  
that Sankara speaks of Bhakti as  
the stepping stone to Jnana. But in  
understanding the meaning of this  
statement, we should not forget that  
what he refers to is the lower Bhakti  
which is only a Sadhana and as such  
only a means to Jnana or highest rea-  
lisation. On the other hand, when  
Ramanuja and other Acharyas speak

of Jnana as a stepping stone to Bhakti, Jnana to them means only the lower intellectual knowledge which is a Sadhana leading to the higher realisation. It is in the very nature of things impossible to conceive of a higher stage than the highest realisation. In his Bhaktirasayana Madhusudana Sarasvati also raises the question whether Bhakti and Brahman-vidya (the science of Brahman) are the same, and if so what necessity there is for a treatise on the doctrine of Bhakti. In reply he points out that there is a necessity for a separate treatise as the two are different in respect of four things, viz., Svarupa (form), Sadhana (means), Phala (result), and Adhikara (qualification). He points out that in Bhakti the mind melts out of Love and takes the form of the Beloved, whereas in Brahman-vidya there is no such melting of heart and the mind is concentrated on the undifferentiated Brahman. Whereas in the former the mind is Savikalpa (with modification), in the latter it is Nirvikalpa (without modification). With respect to the means he points out that whereas Brahman-vidya is dependant on the study of the Mahavakyas such as 'Thou art That', Bhakti arises by a study of such treatises as describe the glories of the Lord. With respect to result, love of God is what is aimed at in Bhakti and destruction of ignorance in Brahman-vidya. So far as qualification is concerned, every living being is entitled to Bhakti but not so to Brahman-vidya which is only for specially qualified aspirants. It will be seen from the whole discussion that the topics discussed, namely Bhakti and Brahman-vidya, have reference only to the stage of Sadhana and not to the stage of realisation. But unlike

other Acharyas, Madhusudana gives an equal and independent status to both as methods of Sadhana.

2. *That*.—Refers to the Prema of Sutra 2 and Anurita of Sutra 3.

3. *Intoxicated*.—The word Maththa means either intoxicated or mad. Taking it to mean intoxicated, the Bhakta is like the Maththabhringa or the bee which gets intoxicated by drinking honey. It is quite common in Upanishadic literature to compare the Atman to Madhu or honey. The Sufis often compare it to wine. The use of wine in Christian liturgy, of the Soma juice in Vedic Yajna, and of liquor in the Sakta worship is meant to symbolise this enjoyment of the sweetness of Divine Bliss. The realised man is in uninterrupted enjoyment of this honey or wine which is so sweet and health-giving. Just as people under the influence of wine are sometimes seen to develop strength and express their latent talents, so the realisation of God and constant enjoyment of Divine Bliss make man spiritually and morally pure and healthy and fit to undertake any kind of hard work in the service of God and of man. It makes the dumb eloquent, and the lame cross mountains, as the poet says. The fool becomes a poet and the weak and cowardly become heroes under its influence. Witness how Jesus, the carpenter's child, became the wisest man of his age, and brave enough to defy the might of the Roman Empire, or how Prahlada dared to disobey his father whom all the world dreaded and obeyed.

In the next place, the realised man is a law unto himself. His conduct and behaviour are sometimes as inscrutable as are the ways of the Lord Himself. No man can foresee

or predict what he may or may not do under particular circumstances. He has no will of his own, as he has already surrendered it completely to the Lord. He is not the slave of so-called common sense or reason, which often makes a man cold and calculating and selfish, nor is he in the grip of conventional laws of society or Sastra. He is under the benign influence of a power higher than human, and his behaviour and conduct depend upon how this higher power makes use of him for its own inscrutable purposes. He is simply an instrument in the hands of God, and is happy to be made use of as He thinks best. His conduct and behaviour, being sometimes strange and queer, and at other times not understandable from the standpoint of ordinary human reason and experience, may often appear similar to those of lunatics or drunkards.

A St. Francis of Assisi preaching to birds, his little sisters as he calls them, or his persuading a wolf, whom he calls his brother, to a better life ; a Buddha offering to sacrifice his life to save a goat ; a Christ atoning for the sins of mankind and forgiving the enemies who brought about his death ; a Ramakrishna daring to slap his patroness on the face and refusing to accept a gift of ten thousand rupees ; a Vivekananda giving up his prospect of worldly prosperity—are these not supreme examples of madness from the point of view of common sense realists ?

Narada is not alone in characterising a Bhakta as intoxicated. Nam-malwar used to say, "If men were drunk with the love of God, they ought to dance like mad men in the streets. If they cannot do that, they are not love-smitten." Sri Rama-

krishna says that a true devotee who has drunk deep of the wine of Divine love is like a veritable drunkard, and as such cannot always observe the rules of propriety. He also speaks of the god-intoxicated man as being unconscious of himself or the external world just like a drunkard. He once said that when he saw the feet of the Mother, he felt intoxicated, as if he had drunk five bottles of wine. According to Sri Ramakrishna, the Bhakta may be found sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, and at other times dancing and singing, being moved by different emotions, and may even be found moving about like an unclean spirit or a mad man.

European mystics also often compare the state of realisation to a state of intoxication or madness. Thus Plato somewhere describes it as 'saving madness'. Again when the Christian mystic says *Sanguis Christi, inebria me*, he is asking for such a gift of supernal vitality, a draught of that wine of Absolute Life which runs in the arteries of the world. In the Fioretto, it is told of John of Parma how he was drunk of the chalice of the spirit of Life delivered by Christ to St. Francis. Again Mechthild of Magdeburg says, "I would drink, for a space, of the unmingled wine." Emerson in his essay on the Oversoul points out that a tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in man as if he is blasted with excessive light. The trances of Socrates, the union of Plotinus, the Vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the Aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and the Illumination of Swedenberg are all of this kind.

We thus see how Narada is justified in characterising the realised man as

intoxicated or mad. Śrī Ramakrishna used to say that all people are mad, the only difference being that while some are mad after women and gold, others are mad after God. We should take care, however, to remember that we cannot make queerness or unreasonableness a test of realisation. For while some realised men may appear mad at times, all need not necessarily be queer always ; neither need a mad man always be a spiritually realised man.

4. *Fascinated*.—The word *Stabdhā* is also used metaphorically to denote absence of activity. When the devotee is in the presence of his beloved in deep Samadhi, he becomes fascinated and loses all power of action, just as a rat becomes unable to move its limbs when it is fascinated by the looks of a cobra who is about to swallow it, or as a man dead drunk loses all capacity for independent motion, or as a bee which has drunk too much honey is not able to fly. Moreover, when he has reached the stage of perfection, there is no further

possibility of any activity by way of Sadhana as he has nothing more to achieve. This does not, however, mean that he is idle. But even while he appears to be active externally when he is not in Samadhi, it is no more the devotee that is acting but it is God who acts through him. This is the whole burden of the teaching on 'work' contained in the Gita. Among mystics, Ruysbroeck describes the life of one who has achieved this state as 'ministering to the world without, in love and mercy, whilst inwardly abiding in stillness and utter peace.'

5. *Immersed...Higher Self*.—This gives the reason for the apparent queerness of conduct described above. The Higher Self is the same in all so that to be immersed in the Higher Self does not preclude service of the world. *Atmarama* (delight in *Atman*) is quite consistent with *Loka-hite rata* (delighting in the world's welfare). Cf., Gita V:24 & 25 where the two characteristics are coupled together.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Thought and Reality**—Sankara & Hegel : By P. T. Raju. Published by Allen & Unwin, London. Price 10sh. 6d.

The term Idealism in European and Indian philosophy has a very vague connotation. There are as many shades of Idealism as there are Idealist philosophers. The grand Idealistic tradition of European philosophy is represented fully in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel. Kantian Idealism was denounced as too formal and was considered too intellectualistic. The Aristotelian attack on Plato was fully developed in the objective Idealism of Hegel. Plato believed in the company of a set of Universals. These universals manifested themselves in the particulars and the particulars participated in the Universals. The particulars were imperma-

nent and the Universals eternal. The unity of Universals was considered by Plato as the constitutive stuff of reality. As against this type of Idealism the objective Idealists took objection. Hegel after Aristotle was the first man to define clearly the doctrine of the concrete Universal. Hegel held that neither the Universals nor the Particulars could be found apart from each other. The Universal was never found apart from the Concrete Particular. Reality for Hegel was the Concrete Universal expressing itself in the dynamic dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Reality was Thought and the Rational was the Real. The British development of Hegelian Idealism is found in the Philosophies of Bradley and Bosanquet. The Italian development of Hegelian Thought is the philosophy of Croce

and Gentile. The American development of Hegelian Thought was found in the philosophy of Royce. The philosophy of Bradley is the nearest approximation to the philosophy of Sri Sankara.

Hegelianism believed that Thought and its categories were enough to account for Reality. The dialectic method of Hegel points out the very logic of life. Hegel makes human history the autobiography of the world spirit. Hegel's method deduces the higher from the lower. There is no thrill of an adventure in the Hegelian metaphysics. Hegel's method is constructive and scientific. It cannot scale the spiritual summits of Advaitic Ananda. We discover by intuition and explain by logic. Thought is after all an adventure of the mind. It is not coeval with Reality. Reality is experience. Life is above logic Beauty above harmony and the Upanishadic spirit above consistency.

The Advaita dialecticians have followed a very critical method. They have taken sufficient care and necessary pains to examine the categories of human knowledge, such as cause, quality, generality, etc. They have found all of them contradiction-ridden. They have laid down the satisfaction of two criteria as characterising the Ultimate Reality. They are : (1) it should not be sublated and (2) it should not be uncognisable like the horns of an hare or the barren woman's son. The world of knowledge—multiplicity is neither Real nor Unreal, nor Real-unreal. It is not Real because it is sublated in dreams and deep sleep. It is neither Unreal because it is cognised. So the world is Real as well as Unreal. It is this mysterious perplexity that is explained by the notoriously misunderstood term Maya. We cannot commit ourselves as to the nature of the phenomena. The doctrine of Maya asks us to wisely suspend and not recklessly repudiate the affirmations about Reality. The academic Advaitin is interested in pointing out that every other position held by the opponent is untenable. The unity of knowledge in Advaita is derived from the unity of experience.

On the dialectic side, the Advaitins strongly oppose the doctrine of difference and the author of the book under review has a very fine chapter under the dialectics

of difference. Dr. P. T. Raju has tried his best to point out to the academic world that Advaita is not a cheap, emotional experience based on the alleged declarations of scriptures. The dialectics on difference if Mandana, Vacaspati and Chitsukhi are glorious examples of pure logic. The Advaitin is not attracted by the fatal fascination of the concrete Universal. Reality for the Advaitin is identity. It is not a transmutation of the lower into the higher 'somehow'. It is not an identity in difference. It is an identity which is impartite experience. The lower world of phenomena is negated in Brahman. It is not the method of mere contradiction. It is experience not contradicted. It is based on the rock of experience not on the sandy foundations of empirical thought. The higher is not deduced from the lower. The lower is negated in the higher. Advaita advocates adventure. The adventurer feels giddy as he mounts the last steps of swaying spire of an ancient Gothic Cathedral. It is all experience of a self-certifying nature. Sankara at once supplements and corrects the dry idealistic metaphysics of the West. Sankara-advaita had the most perfect concept of Unity which is experience. Spiritual experience and its expression in Revelation, are at once the bed-rock and the differentia of Indian philosophy from the rest of world thought.

P. NAGARAJA RAO, M.A.

*Dialogues from Upanishads : By Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh. Published by Em. Airi, Editor, "Ideal Home Magazine," Amritsar.*

This is one of the useful books among the writings of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. The author has selected and translated important sections from all the principal ten Upanishads, except Isa and Mandukya. The sections selected are mostly those occurring in the conversational form in the Upanishads, and hence the name 'Dialogues from the Upanishads'. The students of Upanishads know very well that many of the precious teachings of these books are couched in conversational form and are presented in the setting of stories. Hence Swami Sivananda has done well in

bestowing his attention on these, and producing the present book which will be found an excellent Introduction to the Upanishads by the lay reader. The simplicity of style and the non-technical way of translation adopted, enhance further the usefulness of the book in this respect.

But we wish to make a general criticism of certain aspects of this book, and that would be applicable to the writings of the Swami in general. We note in his books, for example in the Introduction to the present book, a tendency to adopt a prophetic role, and couch his writings in the language appropriate to world-teachers and messiahs. We do not approve of this, for messiahs and world-teachers are few and far between, and when every spiritual aspirant writes in such a strain, the common people are likely to carry impressions that are not conducive to their spiritual progress. We would also have liked that a good book like this did not carry the prefatory article entitled "In Quest of a Sat Guru" by Swami Yogananda Saraswati; for any man with critical spirit would feel it to be a blatant advertisement of the author, which spiritual men in this country are never supposed to encourage or to tolerate. Without these features, the value of the work would have been much greater.

*Srimad Bhagavata : Condensed in the poet's own words by Pandit A. M. Srinivasachariar and translated into English by Dr.*

*V. Raghavan. M.A., Ph.D. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price Re. 1-4.*

On the same plan as their abridgement of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, Messrs. Natesan & Co., have now made available to the English-reading public the great devotional scripture, the Bhagavata, in a condensed form. The book contains the abridged Sanskrit text, and a very good translation of the same in English.

While the reader who has no access to the original Bhagavata, or who has not the patience to read the full translation of it, will feel grateful to the publishers for this good book, we have to remark that the difficulty in preparing an edition of this kind is much greater in the case of the Bhagavata than in that of the other two books. One may doubt what value an edition of the Bhagavata can have when all the soul-inspiring invocations and philosophical discourses are left out. For in the Bhagavata there is nothing like a plot as in the Ramayana or the Bharata, and all the charm of the original arises from the deep devotional fervour pervading the whole of the book. A condensation of this kind cannot be expected to bring out this all-important aspect of the work. Yet it is useful in its own way to a certain class of readers, especially to those who want to satisfy themselves as to what the subject-matter of the Bhagavata is.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Belur Math An Appeal

Swami Madhavananda, the Acting Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, Belur, has issued the following appeal :

Readers of the Life of Swami Vivekananda are aware that when he succeeded in finding a permanent home for the sacred remains of his great Master Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math near Calcutta, in the year 1899, he heaved a sigh of relief as having discharged a heavy responsibility. It was his firm belief that the Master would live in that sanctuary, for ages to come, 'for the welfare of the many, for the

happiness of the many'; for did he not say to his beloved Naren, "I will live wherever you will carry me"? That the place has a peculiar attraction for men and women from all parts of the world holding diverse beliefs, is patent even to a casual observer who watches the ever-increasing crowds of visitors that gather there every day, particularly on festive occasions. A large percentage of these people come with sincere religious hankerings in their hearts, and never fail to experience an inward peace and blessedness. All this is attributable to the divine presence of Sri Ramakrishna, who was the embodiment of purity, love and spiritual power.

Swami Vivekananda had dreams of erecting a temple of Sri Ramakrishna on the grounds of the Belur Math. He had even prepared under his directions a plan and design of the temple, which was to be an imposing stone structure with a spacious Natmandir or prayer-hall capable of accommodating a thousand devotees. But he did not live long enough to carry out his project. The cruel hand of death cut short his eventful life in its very prime. The plan and design he left for his proposed temple remained a sacred heirloom with his brother-monks, who could not get together the necessary funds for such a big undertaking. Recently, however, an offer of help came from an unexpected quarter. Some self-sacrificing Western devotees proposed to contribute Rupees six lakhs and a half exclusively for this purpose, with a request that the temple be completed as early as possible. Accordingly, a plan and design of a part stone structure consisting of a Garbhamandir (main shrine) faced with Chunar stone and a Natmandir (prayer hall) partly faced with it, were prepared on the basis of the plan and design left by Swami Vivekananda, and construction started under the supervision of Messrs. Martin & Co., Calcutta. The completed edifice will be a unique work of beauty and grandeur, which will harmoniously blend some of the salient features of Oriental and Occidental architecture and be strong enough to withstand the ravages of time for centuries to come.

But the donation from the West, although princely, has proved insufficient

for the purpose, and needs to be supplemented by other contributions to the extent of at least Rupees one lakh and a half to finish the temple and to construct other necessary works connected with it, such as, a kitchen and store-rooms, a landing ghat and a protective embankment. The construction will be complete by March next. So the above sum has to be collected forthwith. It occurs to us that there may be thousands of devotees and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna all over the country who sincerely feel that the temple erected in his honour at the Belur Math must be as strong and imposing as possible, and they would naturally like to contribute their quota in materialising the cherished project of Swami Vivekananda. We therefore consider it our duty to acquaint the public with the present situation regarding the temple and invite their kind co-operation. Our reticence in this matter has led many to conclude that the whole of the estimated cost has been subscribed, and that consequently no further help is necessary. But it is not so. Now is the time for our countrymen to demonstrate their admiration and regard for Sri Ramakrishna according to their means. Here is an opportunity for them to join hands with our Western friends, so that both East and West may unite in paying homage to this great Prophet of the Harmony of Religions, whose advent was for the good of the whole world. Any contribution sent to the President, Ramakrishna Math, P.O., Belur Math, Howrah Dt., mentioning the Temple Fund, will be thankfully received and acknowledged.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION

Mr. B. Sreeraman, the Hon. Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry makes the following announcement :

The following are the results of the Competitive Examination held by the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samithi, Rajahmundry, in October 1937. —

**11 Sub-Juniors—FIRST PRIZE:—**No. 90, D. Maulana, Ellore.

**SECOND „** No. 37, G. Krishnadas, Tenali.

**FIRST CLASS:—**No. 99.

**SECOND „** No. 37, 92.

**THIRD „** No. 70, 73, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 117.

**46 Juniors— FIRST PRIZE:—**No. 107, Y. Hari Srinivasa Rao, Ellore.

**SECOND „** No. 50, V. V. Satyanarayana, Masulipatam.

**FIRST CLASS:—**No. 3, 49, 50, 57, 75, 107, 109, 116, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 127, 132, 133, 136.

**SECOND „** No. 59, 108, 125.



THIRD CLASS No. 4, 12, 13, 14, 20, 32, 45, 48, 54, 55, 58, 64, 77,  
111, 112, 113, 113-A, 115, 118, 119, 126, 130, 131,  
134, 135, 137.

5 Seniors — FIRST PRIZE :—No. 83, R. Ramakrishnan, Udamalpet.  
No. 91, K. Sitaramaswami, Rajahmundry.

FIRST CLASS :—No. 83, 91.

SECOND „ No. 69.

THIRD „ No. 84, 87.

Prizes and Certificates of merit will be sent to the address of the Chief Superintendent in due course.

The next examination with the same text books will be held at 3 P. M. on 16-10-1938 at all places from which 8 candidates apply.

### Vedanta Society of Denver, Colorado

A friend from Denver writes :

To realise the evanescence of the time element, those who have been absorbed in helping to establish the Vedanta Centre in Denver have only to recall that it has been a year and a few months since the arrival of Swami Vividishananda. So rapidly have the weeks and months gone, so happy have been the associations, and so sublime the inspiration of the Swami as leader ! To many of the students it has been the happiest year of a lifetime—a privilege long awaited !

Following the arrival of the Swami from Washington, D.C., on May 19, 1936, a series of open lectures was given on the various phases of Vedanta and the general life and culture of the people of India, some of which were illustrated by his beautiful collection of slides. The response to all of these lectures was so good that, though late in the season, it was decided to organise regular classes for the study of Vedanta. The Sunday lectures continued until the end of June, and due to the fact that Denver is a vacation city and health resort it was decided to hold the week-day classes right through the summer. Even in the heat of an exceptionally warm season the attendance was sufficient to keep a nucleus of interested students together.

During the first week of August, 1936, the visit of Swami Akhilananda of Providence, Rhode Island, left a deep impression. In order that the new students might meet him, a reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Thom who have for many years been connected with the Vedanta Movement. Swami Akhilananda was pleased to see the earnestness and sincerity

of the group and gave a talk, bringing out what Vedanta stands for and what it would mean to Denver to have a center established here.

Towards the end of September, 1936, a second series of public lectures was arranged in one of the most spacious and well-located halls of the city. These lectures were also well received and followed by newly organised classes and the work continued throughout the season.

The regular week-day classes have been held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Y.M.C.A., Building, located in one of the most accessible parts of the city. The Sunday evening lectures since last October have been held in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, one of the finest hotels of Denver. A medium-sized auditorium was engaged. Soon after this arrangement the management of the hotel redecorated and furnished the auditorium in a pleasing and dignified manner. The texts studied in the classes have been the Bhagavad Gita on Tuesday evenings and Patanjali's Aphorisms on Yoga on Thursday evenings. Early in the year the Katha Upanishad was studied and short courses given on Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga.

For several months following the special lectures in September, Swami Vividishananda found it necessary to organise a special day class for those who could not attend the evening classes. This class continued until the pressure of spring activities made it necessary for the majority of the members to discontinue with the understanding that the routine be re-established next fall.

Every student who has attended the classes consistently has only high praise for the Swami's methods of teaching and ex-

position of such profound subjects. His friendliness and sympathy in his personal relations with the students have done much to deepen the effect of the class work.

Naturally, the outstanding events of the year's work were the celebrations of the birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna.

On the evening of February 12, 1937, Swami Vividishananda, the members and several invited guests met at the home of Mr. Elsie Green for the special celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday. After a most touching devotional service led by the Swami, a program of short informal talks and readings by the students followed. Everyone entered into this heartily and as the Swami started showing slides depicting interesting scenes and prominent personages of the Order, a spirit of love and enthusiasm for the work of the Ramakrishna Mission swept the entire group.

The public service commemorating the birth of Swami Vivekananda was held in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Sunday, February 14, 1937. Special invitations were issued as a result of which the auditorium was filled to capacity. Swami Vividishananda gave an eloquent discourse on the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. Following this tribute slides were shown illustrating the theme "Gorgeous India." Many lingered after the service to felicitate the Swami and express their deep appreciation.

Immediately following these activities, preparations were started for a fitting celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna. It was decided to have three separate functions, namely, a banquet for members and friends with Hindu food served, the public service, and lastly a public entertainment, the object of which was to familiarize the general public with the spirit and aim of the Vedanta Movement in a popular way.

The banquet of Hindu food was the first of its kind ever given in Denver and left an indelible impression upon all the guests. It was held in one of the fine old homes of the city, Friday evening, April 2, 1937. Following the enjoyment of the exotic and never to be forgotten food, a programme was given. After several musical numbers and talks by students, the Swami closed with a touching and inspiring review of the life and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna.

To many it was the first time they heard of the great Prophet and Seer of Modern India. All in all, it was a memorable evening. Among the guests were several from distinguished social and intellectual circles of the city.

The public service commemorating the Master's Birthday was held in the regular lecture room of the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Sunday, April 4, 1937. The service was well attended. Swami Vividishananda reached his usual heights of eloquence as he took for his subject, "Ramakrishna, the Man of God."

Since the entertainment, which took place on Wednesday, April 7, 1937, was to share with the public some of the spiritual and cultural traditions of India, the chief feature was an illustrated talk by Swami Vividishananda entitled, "See India with Me." As usual the audience was most appreciative. This was followed by readings from the poetry of Swami Vivekananda Rabindranath Tagore and Madam Sarojini Naidu by Mrs. Clarence Thom, in Hindu costume, which readings were very impressive. There were several piano solos and the concluding numbers were beautiful ballet dances given by Miss Glenlyth Woods. The program was given in the social hall of the Y.M.C.A. Building and was considered a success.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the work of the young Vedanta Center is the number of outside speaking engagements filled by the Swami in the weeks following the birthday celebration.

Each year the last week of April is celebrated in America as the International Poetry Week. Denver being the cultural center of the midwest, this festival is celebrated with many public gatherings featuring the poetry of many nations. It is significant that the Swami was asked to speak upon two occasions, on the poetry of India. At Chappell House, a cultural centre of the city, he addressed the Colorado Poetry Society, his subject being "The Mystical Element in Indian Poetry." The Swami gave a second discussion of this subject later in the Poetry Week at a public luncheon at the Argonaut Hotel, being introduced by Mrs. Elizabeth Quecreau, in charge of the international program. There were many distinguished poets and writers present, and the friends of the Swami were

not the only ones who were openly enthusiastic over his speech.

Following the Poetry Week engagements, he was asked to give an illustrated lecture before the Explorers' Club where he was introduced by Professor W. E. Sikes, head of the Sociological Department of the University of Denver. This lecture was so well received that the Swami was asked to speak again before the same club next winter. On May 12, 1937, one of the several Denver chapters of the P. E. O., a national educational society invited Swami Vividishananda to give an illustrated talk upon the scenic beauties of Kashmir. This talk was also well liked. Then on May 13, 1937, before the Occult Metaphysical Group the swami spoke upon "Spiritual Unfoldment and Planes of Consciousness." All present expressed their appreciation and the hope that they would have the pleasure of hearing Swami Vividishananda again. Later, on the 27th, before one of the largest classes of boys and girls in literature of the University of Denver, the Swami was asked to speak upon "The Doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation." The Swami was nicely introduced by Professor F. MacFarlane and Dr. M. Nakos-teen, both of whom belong to the faculty. The lecture made a very good impression upon the students and promises to lead to others before appreciative University classes.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore

The report of the Ashram for the year 1936 gives an account of the many-sided activities of the institution in the city of Mysore and its neighbourhood. The Ashram conducted ten weekly classes on religion and morals in different parts of the city, mostly in schools and hostels for the student population. The Study Circle for the benefit of the Swamis of the Order consisted of five monastic members, and under the assistance of some university professors and other learned friends they underwent a course of study in sociology, biology, logic, scientific method, Western philosophy and Mandukya Karika. A special building for the members of the study circle was com-

pleted. The Ashram library was enriched with 65 new books. The number of residents in the Students' Home attached to the Math was eight. With a building grant of Rs. 2,000 received from the Mysore Government the Home building was released from the mortgage debt on it.

An important item of the Ashram's work is the welfare work conducted in the Paduvahalli village. A night school, meetings to discuss the village problems and lectures by prominent gentlemen of the city on topics affecting village life formed the important items of work in the village. The village has also a co-operative society with 62 members and a share capital of Rs. 1,500.

During January and February of 1937 the Ashram held a one-week celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth-centenary which has given a great fillip to the movement in Mysore. In memory of the centenary the Ashram published a new edition of Mr. K. V. Puttappa's book on Swami Vivekananda and a translation of Mandukya Karika by Swami Nikhilananda.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Cawnpore

The Ashram conducts worship everyday, and on Sundays holds religious classes followed by discussions. Besides, it organises public meetings, of which there were 21 during the year 1936. The Brahmacharins of the Ashram also go on preaching tours. The Ashram runs an out-door dispensary with Allopathic, Homoeopathic and surgical sections. The total number of cases in all these together for the year was 26,550. The Ashram students make collections in kind and coin on Sundays, and use this to assist stranded strangers with food and money. In 1936 the Ashram undertook relief work in Uno during the Ganges flood. The Ashram conducts two free primary schools and a free night-school, besides a Students' Home for poor students. There were 12 inmates in the Home during the year. The Ashram runs an efficient institute for physical culture, and a reading room for Harijans.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

समासदानां वृद्धानां सतां कथयतः कथाः । ग्राहसन् अभ्यसूयंश्च सर्ववृद्धान् गुरुन् परान् ॥  
युवानश्च समासीना वृद्धानपि गतान् सतः । नाभ्युत्थानाभिवादाभ्यां यथापूर्वमपूजयत् ॥  
मातरं पितरं वृद्धमचार्यमतिथिं गुरुम् । गुरुत्वान्नाभ्यनन्दन्त कुमारान् नान्वपालयन् ॥  
न शौचमन्वरुध्यन्त तेषां सूदृजनास्तथा । मनसा कर्मणा वाचा भक्ष्यमासीदनावृतम् ॥  
अन्तर्दशाहे चान्नन्ति गवां क्षीरं विचेतनाः । क्रमदोहं न कुर्वन्ति वत्सस्तन्यानि भुञ्जते ॥  
उच्चैश्चाभ्यवदन् रात्रौ नीचैस्तन्नामिरज्वलत् । अनायां कृपणां भार्यो घ्नन्ति नित्यं शपन्ति च ॥  
मार्जारिकुक्कुटश्चानैः क्रीडां कुर्वन्ति मानवाः । द्रव्योपकरणं सर्वं नान्ववेक्षत् कुटुंबिनी ॥  
प्राकारागारविध्वंसान् न स्म ते प्रतिकुर्वते । आश्रमस्थान् विकर्मस्थ्या प्रद्विषन्ति परस्परम् ॥  
शौचाचारपरिभ्रष्टाः निर्लज्जा भोगवञ्चिताः । ग्रहजालाभिस्तस्याना ह्यासस्तत्र स्त्रियः पुनः ॥  
बालानां प्रेक्षमाणानां स्वयं भक्ष्यमभक्षयत् । तयाभृत्यजनं सर्वमसंतर्प्य च दानवाः ॥

(Moral degradation of the following nature brought about the extinction of the prosperity and glory (Shree) of the Danavas :) They laughed out of court respectable elders of higher attainments in the assemblies, and cherished animosity towards them. When revered elders came, the younger men, seated at their ease, refused to honour them by getting up and saluting them respectfully. Mothers, fathers, aged seniors, preceptors and guests were not shown respect due to their exalted position. They neglected the upbringing of children. Their cooks grew unclean in their work, words and thought, and left articles of food exposed. Not allowing even ten days to pass, they would milk a newly calved cow heartlessly. The cows were milked improperly, and calves were deprived of their share. During nights they made much noise and kept all places improperly lighted. Daily they thrashed and abused their helpless, pitiable wives. Petting cats and dogs and fowls became the hobby of the people. The housewives took no care of wealth and household articles. Houses lay in ruins, but no repair was done. Becoming delinquent in the duties proper to their respective stations in life, people of different orders indulged in mutual hatred. Deceived by sensuality, women became impure, ill-behaved and immodest, and took to the habit of always standing by the windows of houses. Without giving to the servants, and in the gaze of children, people ate delicacies all of themselves.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 235.

## DOCTRINES OF SUPERMAN I

[We have given below a brief review of the conceptions of the highest type of human beings in two of the great world religions. The word Superman is used here not in the Nietzschean sense, but in its spiritual significance so as to include all the varying conceptions of perfection found in the important religions of the world.]

### I

**T**HE best revelation of God to man is in the life of persons who truly embody the ideal of holiness. But most of these holy men are limited in powers. Most of them begin their spiritual career from a sense of suffering and insecurity in this world of mortality, and end by reaching a state which gives them a certainty regarding the ultimate nature of things, and a feeling of aloofness from the struggles and sufferings of the world. No doubt those who come into close contact with them receive light and inspiration from their example, but they leave little behind that can stir the imagination of men far removed from them in time and space. For without the quality of adventure, without a vivid participation in the hopes and fears of men, a life, however well-lived according to the commonplace standards of goodness, can do little to rouse the enthusiasm of vast numbers of men. Thus holy men of the ordinary type lack dynamism of personality, and the saving grace that manifests through them can uplift only themselves and a few disciples, but not men in general. Then again they have no message to deliver unto the world, their teachings being confined to the exposition of established spiritual traditions. It is not given to them to give a new lead to thought, to fuse the past with the present, or to give

solution to varieties of new problems with which the past was never confronted.

As a result, while men have venerated such static types of saintliness as conservers of traditions and as exemplars of the ideal, they have always reserved the most deep-felt adoration of their heart to holy men of a different stamp who combine in themselves all the virtues of the static type in addition to certain unique powers of personality. Such men are known by different names in different religions—as the Prophet among the Muslims, as the Buddha among the Buddhists, as the Christ among the Christians, and as the Divine Incarnation among the Hindus. As we shall presently show, there are wide differences in these conceptions of different religions, but they are all at one in distinguishing the types of persons denoted by these expressions from ordinary holy men. For through them has mankind received new spiritual ideas, and through them has descended into large communities a new enthusiasm for striving after high ideals. And by the sheer power of their personality they have brought into existence new types of character which gradually gain wide prevalence in society and set an indelible stamp on the culture that produces them.

### II

Having mentioned above the distinguishing characteristic common to

the highest type of humanity cherished by all the religions, let us now consider in brief the distinctive features emphasised in the conception of such exceptional men held by some of the great world religions. Of these the Islamic conception is the simplest. Islam is perhaps the one religion that makes the most uncompromising distinction between the natural and the super-natural, and scrupulously discards any theory that has a tendency to equate anything in the natural or the created world with God or the super-natural. Hence, while every other religion tends to identify the exceptional spiritual man with the Deity, Islam, though maintaining the former's uniqueness, has categorically denied his divinity. The highest type of spiritual men are known to Islam as Prophets or Messengers of God. These personages are in no way embodiments of the Deity, but only souls specially commissioned by Him to reveal his law unto ignorant mankind. There have been a succession of such prophets, and in fact there is no nation or country to which no 'warner' of this kind has been sent, nor a 'book' revealed. But the divine revelation became perfect when the Quran was revealed through the Prophet Mohammed and Islam, the natural religion of man, was founded. This final revelation includes in itself all that is good and universal in the past revelations, and abrogates what is local and temporary in them just as a sovereign abrogates an imperfect or temporary law by a more perfect one. Hence Mohammed, though a Prophet like all others, is distinguished from among them as the seal of Prophets, because there will be no more Prophet after him since revelation has become complete with

his message. But he is not on this account anything more than man. He is a created being like all others, and is only the first among Muslims. Hence no such term as Divine incarnation or son of God is to be applied to him. He is an ideal character, and has shown man how to behave in different situations of life. For this reason man should follow his footsteps, and revere his personality. But he is not to be worshipped; not even a picture or a statue of him should be made. For worship, or rather man's prayerful self-surrender, is due only to God, and the Prophet is not God in any sense.

The Islamic conception of the Superman, like all other doctrines of that religion, is simple and clear, without any complications resulting from philosophical subtleties or mystical vagueness. Though the Prophet did not claim, nor was awarded, the status of the Divinity manifested on earth, no one can say that he was a whit below those marked with such super-human distinctions in the matter of inspiring his followers with a consciousness of their spiritual destiny, in regenerating the life of a large section of humanity in the light of a new spiritual ideal, in leaving a distinct stamp on the culture that produced him, and in bringing into existence a new type of character based upon his life and example.

### III

From Islam, which is Semitic in origin, let us now pass on to Buddhism, a daughter of the great Indo-Aryan family of religions. There can perhaps be no more impressive study in contrasts than between these two religions—the first with its simple faith in God, its philosophical barrenness,

and its freedom from mystical influences, and the latter with its sublime scepticism, its ethical fervour, and its insatiable tendency to clothe itself in the subtlest forms of metaphysical thought and sometimes even in weird types of mysticism.

The Buddhist doctrine of the Superman, at least in its earlier forms, does not, as in most other religions, centre round any theory of descent of God-head into the world or of the coming of exceptional souls that bring a divine message of hope and redemption. For Buddhism, to start with, did not so much inculcate a belief in the existence of God as a faith in the possibility of evolving man into a God or a God-like being. And accordingly its theory of the Superman too is not one of Divine descent but of human ascent.

There are two types of perfect men recognised in Buddhism, the Arhat and the Buddha, of which the latter alone can be called Superman in the true sense of the term. An Arhat is a person, who, being dissatisfied with the life of the world, takes to the ascetic life, passes through the Buddhist system of moral training, practices the methods of meditation and investigation into the truth of human personality, and finally attains the supreme peace of Nirvana which transcends all categories of understanding, and cannot therefore be described either as 'is' or 'is not.' The Arhat, no doubt, frees himself from the sufferings of life and attains a state of peace and blessedness, but he cannot, however, be called a Superman as he fails to unfold certain yet higher possibilities latent in man. These higher possibilities can be realised not through a life of mere introversion and pre-occupation with one's own salvation, but by a combination

of dynamic virtues that are born of an active life of positive self-sacrifice, and the wisdom and insight which are the fairest fruits of a contemplative life. The one who gains this higher development is the Buddha, the true Superman.

The attainment of Buddhahood is the result of the long and arduous practice of the discipline of self-sacrifice. The nature of this discipline has been made plain, and given in all its graphic detail by the sacred books of the Buddhists, which describe the preparatory period that Gautama Siddhartha had to undergo in order to become the Buddha. At the very start a Buddha in the making, or a Bodhisattva as he is technically called, must have fairly advanced on the path of Arhatship, or the type of perfection that ends in individual salvation without any social or cosmic significance. But overcome by great pity for the sufferings of living beings (Mahakaruna), and by a burning desire to work for the good of all (Mahamaitri), he abandons the goal of Arhatship and its promise of speedy cessation of all sufferings for himself. In place of that, he takes up the cross, and irrespective of all considerations of personal sufferings, devotes himself unreservedly to the service of others, so that by the power of his self-sacrifice he may in the long run engender a spiritual energy that will open a way of redemption for all living beings.

Gotama the Sakyamuni, who is known to us as the Buddha, is one of those who had undergone this discipline, and it is by virtue of it that he attained Buddhahood and the unique spiritual power associated with it, which distinguishes him from an ordinary man of spiritual illumination (Arhat). In one of his previous

births, as the Bhikshu Sumedha, when he had far advanced in the path of Arhatship, he took upon himself the vow of world-deliverance, and entered on the series of lives as the Bodhisattva—a long and strenuous period of discipline in which there was no thought of individual welfare or salvation, but which was characterised by a supreme readiness to sacrifice all personal interests for the good of others. Men suffer heat and cold for selfish ends, would they not suffer the same for the sake of the world?—this was the motto of the Bodhisattva. He practised as Bodhisattvas are expected to do, the ten Paaramitaas or transcendent virtues consisting of giving, morality, renunciation of the world, wisdom, energy, forbearance, patience, truthfulness, resolution, love and equanimity. Each of these virtues could be practised in three stages—giving, for example, from bestowal of alms, through the sacrifice of wealth and limb, to the surrender of child, wife or life. The Jataka stories, which depict the previous lives of the Buddha as the Bodhisattva, show that Gautama practised all these virtues in all their three stages. It was due to the spiritual energy generated by supreme self-sacrifice in hundreds of births as Bodhisattva that Gotama, the Sakyamuni, attained in his final birth the status of the Buddha or the Enlightened One—a state that differs from that of the Arhat or perfected man in that the latter gives one the power of saving oneself alone while the Buddha, by renouncing the idea of individual salvation and by repeatedly devoting himself to the service of others even at the cost of great personal suffering, gains the capacity to redeem the world. Such is the Superman of Buddhism.

From the foregoing facts it would be clear that Buddhahood is a state, that there is a definite way of training oneself for it, and that it is open to all who put themselves to the required training. Accordingly Buddhist scriptures maintain that there have been many Buddhas, and that there will be many more, Gotama Siddhartha being only the latest of them. Their number is, however, smaller than those of Arhats, because few are able to overcome the attraction of individual Nirvana, and engender in themselves the ethical passion of the Bodhisattva or the Buddha in preparation, without which Supermanhood is impossible of attainment.

But the Buddhist doctrine of the Superman did not, however, for long maintain what may be called its ethical basis and its democratic colouring. With the gradual assertion of the natural instinct of man to believe in a God, if not as a creator, at least as a redeemer, Buddhism imperceptibly changed from a faith that merely asserts the spiritual possibilities of man into a full-fledged religion with its own doctrine of the Deity, His lower manifestations, devotion, worship and the rest. In the midst of this transformation, the theory of the Superman too necessarily changed from a doctrine of man's evolution to perfection, into one of Divine descent as man.

This process of bridge-building was a very ingenious work. Although the original impress of the primitive Buddhism could not be completely overcome, a number of highly mystical theories transformed the historical figure of the man Sakyamuni into Godhead. To trace a few steps in this process of transformation, it was believed even by primitive Buddhists that after his passing away the Buddha



lived in the Dhamma (Law). It was also believed that many Buddhas had appeared in this world from time to time to minister to the spiritual needs of man, and that the Dhamma they all preached was not different from one another but the same. If there is, therefore, unity in the Dhamma preached at various times, it is natural to suppose that there is also a unity in the personalities of their teachers, the various Buddhas. For if truth is immutable, those who reveal it are not many but one.

These conclusions, to which speculative thought was gradually leading men, were given a theological sanction by the doctrine of the Trikayas or 'three bodies.' According to this theory the earthly Buddhas lose their importance considerably and become subordinate to the conception of Dharmakaya or 'the body of law.' What is called Dhamma in Pali books is, in the light of this theory, not merely an abstract law but the sum and substratum of all existence, the Tathata or 'trueness' which is the inner essence and support of the whole universe. It is that which lies beneath all phenomena but continuously manifests itself through them. It is identical with supreme enlightenment or perfect knowledge. According to this doctrine, all the Buddhas that have appeared in the world are not different personalities but in essence identical, being the manifestations of the one eternal Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is world-transcendent, but it expresses itself in this world from time to time for short periods as Nirmanakaya or "creation-body". The earthly Sakyamuni is only one of the many such visible manifestations of the transcendent Buddha, the Dharmakaya, by virtue

of his wondrous illusory power. There is yet another body of the Buddha in contrast to these temporary historical manifestations. This is the Sambhogakaya or the enjoyment body which is rather a vague conception standing for the redemptive activities of the Buddha in the various spheres of the universe. While he is preaching in one sphere, he is eternally active in all the various spheres of the universe as the perpetual organ of grace and revelation,—as the innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of glorified bodies who have gained perfection through a long course of self-denial, or who, though entitled to perfection, have spurned it with a view to help the suffering beings. This doctrine of the Sambhogakaya is rather elusive and difficult to understand. In it we see an attempt on the part of Buddhist theologians to reconcile the old idea of Buddhahood as something won as a result of age-long effort, by passing through the preparatory stage of the Bodhi'sattva, with the notion of it as an eternal and infinite energy working as a perpetual organ of revelation and redemptive love. For the idea of individuals taking the vow of the Bodhi'sattva, viz., that of world-redemption and of attaining superhuman powers of personality through repeated acts of self-sacrifice, is retained—nay, later Buddhism in fact shifts its main emphasis to the Bodhisattvas, and peoples the heavens and the earth with a large number of such helpful and benign beings at various stages of development. But at the same time it seems to maintain that these higher beings are not so much human agents working up their way, but the expressions of a perfect Supreme Being—the Adi-

buddha or Dharmakaya or whatever He may be called.

Thus in the Buddhist doctrine of the Superman we find a gradual passage of thought from the conception of him as purely human and a product of systematic training and discipline, to the notion of him as an epiphany—the manifestation of the Supreme Principle in a human form. Islam, as we have seen, is emphatic about the humanity of the Superman, while Buddhism tries to effect, in its own

unique way, a reconciliation of his humanity with his divinity. In the next number we shall see how Christianity and Hinduism—the two great world religions in which the conception of the Superman, or to use the theological expression, the idea of the Incarnation, has played a very important part—tackle the problem arising from the simultaneous presence of humanity and divinity in these exceptional beings.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

**I**T was about nine in the morning. The Holy Mother had been preparing betel-leaf when I came to see her. Soon we were engaged in a conversation.

Disciple : Mother, I have seen and heard so much ; still I cannot recognize you as my 'own mother.'

Mother : But otherwise, my child, why should you come here so often? 'He who belongs to one comes with him in every age.' You will know your 'own mother in proper time' !

After a while, I said to her, referring to my own parents and brothers, "My parents have brought me up ; I do not know where they are now (after their death) or how they live. Please give your blessings that my brothers may have good tendencies."

Mother : Do most people ever want God ? There are so many people in this very family ; but do all want me ?

After a few minutes she said to me, "Don't worry. Don't lead a worldly life. What need you fear if you are a celibate ? Wherever you will live, you will be free."

Disciple : But, Mother, I have fear.

Mother : No, have no fear. All depends upon the will of the Master.

Disciple : Mind is the whole thing. If the mind be in a pure state, it does not matter where I live. Please see, Mother, that my mind always remains pure.

Mother : May it be so.

It was the birthday of the Holy Mother. Prabodh Babu, a few days before, had come to Jayrambati and had given five rupees to the brothers of the Holy Mother for a special worship on her birthday. The Mother said to them, "You are not going to do anything to-day. I shall wear a new cloth ; the Master will be worshipped with a sweet-offering and I shall partake of it later on. That's all for this occasion."

After the worship in the Shrine, the Holy Mother sat on her couch with her feet hanging down. She had put on a new piece of cloth. Prabodh Babu offered some flowers at her feet. I stood on the porch, near the door. The Mother said to me, "What ? Won't you offer some flowers ? Here they are. Take them." Then I also offered flowers at her feet. We enjoyed a sumptuous feast at midday and afterwards. Prabodh Babu left for Calcutta ; but I was indisposed on account of dysentery. So I remained at Jayrambati.

In the course of conversation the Mother said, "Can you tell me whether anyone could bind God ? Mother Yasoda could bind Krishna because He himself allowed her to do so. The cowherd boys and the milkmaids of Brindavan also realized God.

"As long as a man has desires there is no end to his transmigration. It is the desires alone that make him take one body after another. There will be rebirth for a man if he has even the desire to eat a piece of candy. It is for this reason that a variety of food-stuffs are brought to Belur Math. Desire may be compared to a minute seed. It is like a big banyan tree growing out of a seed

which is no bigger than a dot. Rebirth is inevitable so long as one has desires. It is like taking the soul from one pillow-case and putting it into another ; only one or two out of many men can be found who are free from all desires. Though one gets a new body on account of desires, yet he does not completely lose spiritual consciousness if he has good merits to his credit from previous births. A priest in the temple of Govinda in Brindavan used to feed his mistress with the food-offerings of the Deity. As a result of this sin, after death, he entered into the body of a ghoul. But he had served God in the Temple. As a result of his merit one day he appeared before all in his own physical body. It was possible for him to do so on account of his past good actions. He told people the cause of his inferior birth and said to them further, 'Please arrange a religious festival and music for the redemption of my soul. That will give me salvation.'

Disciple : Is it possible to obtain salvation through religious festivals and music ?

Mother : Yes ; that is enough for the Vaishnavas. They do not perform such obsequies as Shradda, and so forth.

Once I visited the image of Jagannath at Puri at the time of the Car Festival. I wept in sheer joy to see so many people viewing the image of the Deity. 'Ah, I said to myself, it is good. They will all be saved.' But later on I realised that it was not so. Only one or two who were absolutely free from desires could attain their salvation. When I narrated the incident to Yogin Ma, she corroborated this by saying, 'Yes, Mother, only

people who are free from desires attain their Mukti (liberation).'<sup>1</sup>

One morning, while eating my breakfast on the verandah of the Holy Mother's room, I asked her, "Mother, will I have to be initiated into Sannyasa if I am to live in Belur Math?"

Mother : Yes, my child.

Disciple : But Mother, the monastic life begets a terrible vanity.

Mother : Yes, that is true. A monk may become very vain. He may think, 'See, he does not respect me. He does not bow down before me, and so on.' (Pointing to her own white cloth<sup>2</sup>), one should rather live thus with inner renunciation). Gaur Siromani<sup>3</sup> took to the monastic life in his old age when his sense organs had become dull. Is it possible, my child, to get rid of vanity—vanity of beauty, vanity of virtue, vanity of knowledge and vanity of a holy life?

The Holy Mother exhorted me to make ready for the life of renunciation. "Go home," she said, "and tell your brothers once and for all, 'I will not accept any job; I will not be a slave to anyone since my mother is

dead; I will not do anything of that sort. You be happy with your householders' duties'."

The conversation drifted to the austerities of the monastic life. The Mother said, "How hard the life of my children is at the Math<sup>4</sup>. They can neither eat well, nor be well clothed, nor enjoy any good thing in life. I do not like it. Jogin (Swami Yogananda) led a very austere life and as a result he gave up his body through extreme suffering."

The Mother and I were engaged in conversation in the evening.

Disciple: Mother, one gets spiritual realisation at any time if the grace of God descends upon him. Then he does not have to wait for the right time.

Mother : That is true; but can the mango which ripens out of season be as sweet as the one which ripens in the month of Jaishtha, that is, in proper season? Men are trying to get fruits out of season. You see nowadays one gets mangoes and jack-fruits even in the month of Asvin (autumn). This is also true of the efforts that lead to God-realisation. Perhaps you practise some Japa and austerities in this life; in the next life you may intensify the spiritual mood and in the following life you advance farther. It is like that.

Referring to one's getting spiritual realisation suddenly, the Mother said, "God has the nature of a child. One does not ask for it, yet He gives it to him, whereas another man asks for it and God will not give it to him. It is all His whim."

Another day while the Holy Mother was seated on her porch preparing

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<sup>1</sup>Yogin Ma narrated an incident of similar nature in the following way: "One day the Holy Mother and I were meditating side by side in the Shrine of Lakshmi in the temple compound of Jagannath. I said to myself, 'Ah, all these people who have been visiting Jagannath will obtain their Mukti.' Then I heard someone whisper to me, 'No, only those who are free from desires will not be born again.' When I narrated it to the Mother, she said, 'Yogin, the same thing arose in my mind, and I also heard a similar reply.'

<sup>2</sup>The white cloth is the symbol of the householder whereas the monks put on ochre cloths.

<sup>3</sup>He was an outstanding holy man of the Vaishnava sect. He visited the Holy Mother in Brindavan.

<sup>4</sup>Referring to Belur Math and other monasteries of the Ramakrishna Order.

betel-leaf I said to her, "How many in the future will practise spiritual disciplines to propitiate you!" Mother said with a smile, "What do you say! All will say, 'Ah, the Mother had such gout, she used to limp like this.'"

Disciple : You may say that.

Mother : That's good. That is why the Master used to say when he was lying ill at Cossipore Garden, "Those who come to me expecting some earthly gain have disappeared saying, 'Ah, he is an Incarnation of God ! How can he be ill ? This is all Maya.' But those who are my own have been suffering a great deal in seeing this misery." Once when I had fever I became delirious and Kushum said to Golap, 'Golap Didi, come and see. The Mother is talking in delirium ?' Golap said, 'Oh, Mother talks like that !' 'No ?' said Kushum, 'come

and see. It is true.' 'No,' insisted Golap, 'it is nothing.' At last Kushum called Ashu and they all came to my room and found me in a delirious state.

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On the day previous to my initiation I said to the Holy Mother, "Mother, I want to be initiated." Mother said, "Have you not been initiated ?" I answered in the negative. "I thought that you had been initiated," she said. After my initiation she blessed me by saying, "May your body and mind become pure by repeating the name of God."

Disciple : What is the need of repeating the Mantra with the fingers? One can do so mentally.

Mother : God has given the fingers that they may be blessed by the repetition of His name.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE DIVINE MOTHER

*By K. Guru Dutt*

[Mr. Guru Dutt is a distinguished officer of the Mysore Civil Service. The following brilliant article of his is the substance of a speech he delivered on the occasion of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. This is an age when even sincere spiritual aspirants are likely to be carried away from their ideal by the world-wide propaganda in favour of secularistic humanism. Mr. Dutt's article, delineating the vital principle involved in Sri Ramakrishna's message, would come as a great corrective to this tendency.]

### I

QUAINT belief popular in India holds that when a man of outstanding virtue passes away he becomes a star in the sky. Thus it is said that Dhruva by steadfastness in devotion became the Pole Star. Round him revolve the Sapta Rishis, the Great Bear. If we put away the crude and literal meaning of this, we at once observe that it is over our mental horizon that these stars rise and set, and it is in our inner

firmament that they shine. The saints and sages of all times are there as the fixed stars. Many of them are mere specks of light to us. But that is no indication of their size or power ; for astronomers tell us that some of the stars that appear dimmest to us are many thousands of times bigger than the sun. Yet the sun is the nearest fixed star to us and he counts to us far more than all the fixed stars in the heavens. Such appears to me the position of Bhagavan Sri Rama-

krishna in our mental astronomy. Assuredly he has risen before our eyes as the spiritual Sun when the light of the distant stars had become dim and had almost ceased to illumine us. I will complete the comparison by adding that this Sun brought in his wake the Moon, shining, no doubt, with light borrowed from his Master, but so agreeable and stimulating and above all so much nearer to us. I refer of course to Swami Vivekananda. Lest it be thought that I am not doing justice to the dynamic personality of the great Swami Vivekananda by comparing him to so pale and cold a luminary as the moon, I would remind you that the moon is no other than Soma of the Rig Veda which is referred to as *Yajnasriyam*, *nrimaadanam*—the grace of the sacrifice, the exhilarator of mankind—in fact that heady beverage which gave Indra his matchless strength. I would also remind you of the lines in the Bhagavadgita (Ch. XV:14), where Soma, imaged as the Rasa or essence of vitality, is said to be sustaining the food giving plants. Shall we say that the Swami Vivekananda resuscitated with life giving juice, the drooping plants of spirituality in the world?

My concern here is more with Sri Ramakrishna. The extent of the power which this man wields to-day over the minds of men is the most remarkable phenomenon of a century. India has not been lacking in saints. Yet it has not fallen to their lot to make that universal and potent appeal which is the distinction of Sri Ramakrishna. What is the secret of this. It appears to me to lie in the peculiar conception of Deity which he cherished and with which he attained identity. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped this dynamic and moving world,

Jagat, as the Divine Mother. Such was his absorption that he actually used to hold conversation with the Divine Mother. He has said, "I say to my Mother, 'Mother, I am the tool, Thou art the hand; I do what Thou makest me do; I say what thou biddest me say.'" He has said, "When I sit at the feet of the Divine Mother, I feel so intoxicated as if I have drunk five bottles of wine." Whenever the idea of the body or the finite ego would creep in, he would say, "Here (i.e., within him) there are two persons. One is the Divine Mother, the other is Her worshipper. It is the second person who once broke his arm. It is also the second person who is now ill. Do you understand this?" To lose sight of this would be to misunderstand Sri Ramakrishna in toto.

## II

We shall now proceed to examine briefly the concept of the Divine Mother which was so dear to him, and also try to clear some misconceptions. The Divine Mother is conceived as Shakti or Chaitanya. Shakti means power, efficiency or efficacy in its broadest sense. That is the sense in which the whole world impresses us to start with. It is with us all the time. All fervour and all endeavour is Shakti and comes from the same source which is ultimately Divine. She is Sat (Existence) she is Asat (non-existence), she is everything. But two distinct tendencies are noticeable as working in the world—that which tends towards external appearances and leads to bondage on the one hand, and on the other that which turns towards the inner reality and leads to freedom. The former is called 'Aasuri' Shakti and the latter 'Daivi' Shakti. Their qualities have

been defined in the Gita (XVI:5), the one tending to liberation and the other to bondage. Although bondage and freedom both proceed from this single Shakti, still the Divine Mother is conceived as 'appearing' only when she starts the forces of release, the Daivic forces. Thus it has been said, "Though eternal, she is said to be 'originated' when she manifests herself for a 'divine purpose'." Differentiating the actions of those devoted to the Asuri or deluding aspect of Nature (Prakriti), Sri Krishna has said that they embark on a multiplicity of futile hopes, futile actions, and evolve therefrom a futile knowledge and thus drain their vitality dry under the force of delusion (Gita, IX:12). On the other hand the Mahatmas are described as devoted to the Daivi Prakriti (divine aspect of Nature) and to be worshipping Her with singleness of mind (*Ibid* IX:13). Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was such a Mahatma, in fact one of the greatest among them.

It would not be out of place for me to point out here that Asuras should not be conceived as irreligious men. We are told that Ravana was a great Yogi. He as well as Hiranyakasipu, and practically every one of the Asuras, attained their greatness through Tapas. Tapas and Yoga are thus the only means. The main question is what is the objective? To which God is the oblation offered? That was the question which India asked millenniums ago: *Kasmai devaaya havishaa vidhema?* The alternative is mainly: is it offered to the Daivi Prakriti or the Asuri Prakriti? Alas! under the influence of the prevailing tendencies we are likely to lose sight of this vital issue. The weight of great names presses down on us.

Thus, true to the western outlook, Romain Rolland himself in his life of Sri Ramakrishna writes as follows: "There are many souls who believe they are free from all religious belief, but who live immersed in a state of super-rational consciousness, which they term Socialism, Communism, Humanitarianism, Vitalism or even Rationalism. *It is the quality of the thought and not its object*, which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion." I think that Sri Ramakrishna would have emphatically repudiated such a statement because, put in brief, it merely amounts to this: "So long as you worship, it matters little what you worship." On the other hand, Sri Ramakrishna would rather want us use our discrimination, differentiate the Divine (Daiva) from the diabolic (Asura), and follow the Daiva at all costs. Even under the name of Daiva he would ask us fearlessly to discard all shams masquerading under that name, and stick to the inner reality alone. That is his distinction.

The effect of the efflux of time (Kaala) is such that all energy runs down, and concepts, however vital at one time, cease to be such. The appearance remains but the efficacy departs. In fact the appearance itself becomes the greatest obstacle in the way of efficacy. It becomes a mass of dead tradition. To take only a single illustration, only the empty name of God remains, but in actual life we find as if He is powerless. We call on His name in vain, and think He is an empty shadow. We come to speak of Him decorously but for all practical purposes put Him on the shelf. He ceases to be a motive force in our life. Put in symbolical language, it

means that Shakti has, as it were, departed from Siva. Without Shakti, Siva is inert, as is said in the *Sundarāya Lahari*. Then Dharma decays and Adharma prevails. At such times the Lord himself assumes a body and comes down into the world of men. What for? For tending righteousness and extinguishing vice. To suck and withdraw the energy or Shakti from misconceptions, and to re-deposit it in the Sadhu or right conceptions, and to revitalise them. Symbolically it is to collect the dissipated Shakti and re-deposit her, as it were, in Shiva. That was the task for which Sri Ramakrishna came down in this Kali Yuga. Nobly he started it and is still accomplishing it; for such men do not die. If his frail mortal frame is no longer visible to our physical eyes, the Shakti or Divine Mother, the very secret and essence of his power, is there radiant and compelling.

### III

I would like to add that this concept of Shakti is no new one. It has been revered in India through the ages. The national festival of India, the *Dassarah*, is dedicated to Her. She was, I am sure, worshipped by the dark aboriginal tribes of India and was perhaps called Kali or dark on that account. She was worshipped by the white complexioned Aryans who perhaps preferred to call her Gouri or white complexioned like themselves. The white and the black are equally Her dear children. She is present in the Veda behind the numerous gods, like the power behind the throne, in the dim half-perceived figure of Aditi, the Mother of the Gods, of whom it is said, "Aditi is heaven; Aditi is the firmament; Aditi is mother, father and son; Aditi is all the gods; Aditi is the

five classes of men; Aditi is generation and birth" (*Rig Veda*). This Aditi is no minor deity. The very name stands for 'liberation', 'freedom', 'absolute' and 'infinite'. Her main characteristic has been described as the power of delivering from the bonds of physical suffering as well as moral guilt. She is frequently invoked in the Veda as the Beyond, as what is beyond the earth and the sky, the sun and the dawn. In fact she is the most metaphysical of the Vedic deities. On this point Max Muller was so impressed that he exclaims that this is 'a most surprising conception in that early period of religious thought'. We may, however, say that there is no cause for surprise if we hold the Indian view that the gross is evolved out of the subtle, instead of the Western view that the subtle has been evolved out of the gross. I do not propose to pursue further the other indications of the existence of Shakti concept in the Veda. In fact it appears to me to be the warp and woof of the Veda.

Coming to the Upanishads, which form the bedrock of our philosophy, we find the concept of Shakti very clearly brought out in the *Kena Upanishad*, which is one of the smallest of the Upanishads yet one of the oldest and most authoritative. There it is said that Brahma once won a great victory for the gods. By this victory the gods attained majesty and exulted among themselves. "Ours is this victory, ours the majesty," they said. Brahma became aware of this delusion of theirs and appeared before them as a Yaksha—a spirit. But they could not recognise Him. Then they said to Agni "Jaataveda, do ascertain if this being is worthy of adoration." He replied, "Be it so," and



ran up to Brahma. Brahma said, "Who art thou?" He answered, "I am verily Agni. I am verily Jaata-veda." Brahma asked him, "What is thy power?" Agni replied, "I can burn whatsoever there is on earth." Brahma placed a blade of grass before him and said, "Burn this." Approaching it with all his might, Agni could not burn it. He returned discomfited. Then Vayu approached Brahma and boasted of his own prowess. Again Brahma put before him the blade of straw and asked Vayu to move it; but Vayu was unable to stir it. He too returned in shame. Then Indra himself approached Brahma who disappeared. Indra remained there wrapt in contemplation. After a time the Divine Uma, daughter of Himavat, showed herself to him in the sky and told him that it was Brahma who had won the victory for the gods, and she disclosed the real nature of Brahma to Indra. The power that resided in Agni, Vayu and the other gods was no other than the power of Brahma. Divested of this power, the gods were gods only in name and could not even move a blade of straw. Brahma could not thus be grasped even by the gods, but His grace or Shakti, appearing as Uma, revealed Himself—that is to say, the Svabhava of Brahma revealed itself to Indra, after he had learnt proper humility.

#### IV

In the several Puranas the symbolism of this Shakti or Devi has been described in various ways, sometimes as the consort of Siva, sometimes as the Maya of Vishnu, or as Yoganidra under whose influence the Supreme Person lies in deep slumber as it were, or again as Kali the Terrible with her garland of skulls and bloody lolling

tongue, dancing on the very body of Siva. This last form has perhaps been the most misunderstood of all. Yet it was under that form that Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Her. To the sophisticated, I am sure, this will appear as a strange anomaly. They might perhaps like to argue it away as the remnants of superstitious obsession in a great mind resulting from an ignorant and crude upbringing. But I am sure that to do so would be wholly to lose sight of the very secret of the force of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. It would be like depriving a clock of its mainspring. The semblance of a clock would alone remain but alas! it would not work. To adequately expound this Kali is beyond my powers. Symbols like this have their root deep in the subconscious mind of man, and our tiny rational fringe of consciousness, despite the magisterial airs it puts on, cannot fully appraise Her. She will yield Her secret only to those who will worship Her. For the rest we say that She is the profoundest image yet conceived by the mind of man of 'freedom from bondage'. She is the spirit of Siva trampling over the mere body or form of Siva. The main idea is that even that which was intended for the good of man, by efflux of time (Kala), becomes a source of bondage when the spirit has departed and only the traditional form remains. The spirit has its revenge by trampling over the inert form and asserting her own supremacy. At first sight this cannot but appear a terrible act of desecration. Hence the apparently ghastly form. When however the purpose is accomplished, and freedom from the bondage of dead tradition is achieved, then a great load is lifted from man's heart and he becomes as a little

child. Such was the state of Sri Ramakrishna. The terrible austerities he had passed through left no mark of Ahankara (egotism) in him. The spirit of those men who hug their austerities to heart and make it a source of pride is still under the bondage of a Kali whom they have not the courage to conceive as trampling over these traditional forms, after having drunk their blood, that is to say, sucked their essence. I do not want to dilate on this, nor can I say that the symbolism may not have a thousand other equally valid meanings, if not better. Suffice it for me to say that when the Divine Mother has revealed Her innermost nature to Her devotee, she no longer appears terrible but becomes the very embodiment of compassion and tenderness and beauty. As described in the Saptashati, she becomes most benign and charming—(Soumyaa soumyatara asceshasoumye bhyas tvati sundari).

### V

I hope a charge will not be levelled against me, that, starting with Sri Ramakrishna as my subject, I have strayed into the conception of his Divine Mother. My justification is that in the same sense that Jesus Christ said, "I and my Father in Heaven are one," Sri Ramakrishna and the Divine Mother are assuredly one. She is the perennial source from which his teaching and that of Vivekananda flow like the holy Ganges descending from heaven. Such however is the secularising tendency of the present age that already there is a disposition to ignore the cause and hug the effect. I would emphatically say, take care of the cause and the effect will take care of itself. I do not want to minimise the value of the ethical and social side of the teaching of Sri Rama-

krishna. But I am afraid, of late one is hearing too much about Daridra-Narayana and next to nothing about Sriman-Narayana. I feel in my innermost heart that the highest ethical values and ideals of social service can coexist with a thoroughgoing atheistic materialism like that of Marx and his followers. If you should persist in taking these alone as the essence of the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna, and relegate to oblivion that deep and ever-present reliance on, and surrender to, the will of the Supreme Person, otherwise known as the Divine Mother, you will be making a foolish choice. Have both if you can. If not, if you are faced with an alternative, let yours be the choice which Arjuna made when he and Duryodhana went to Sri Krishna seeking his assistance on the eve of the Great War of the Mahabharata. Sri Krishna offered them the choice between his armed paraphernalia on the one hand, and, on the other, himself unarmed and non-combatant. Arjuna chose the person of the Lord while Duryodhana thought he was making a wise and practical choice by accepting the army. The result is well known.

That this was the view of Sri Ramakrishna, and is not something which I am reading into him, I will now show to you by a few brief extracts from his sayings.

"First install God in the temple of the heart; first realise Him. Speeches, lectures and the rest—these may be taken up after you have seen God—not before."

"If instead of preaching to others one worships God all the time, that is preaching enough. He who strives to make himself free, is the real preacher. Hundreds come from all

sides to him who is free, and are taught. When a flower opens, the bees come to it uninvited."

"You talk of social reforms? Well, you may do so after realising God. Remember, the Rishis of old gave up the world in order to attain God. This is the one thing needful. All other things shall be added unto you, if indeed you care to have them. First see God, and then talk of lectures and reforms."

"One ray of light from my Divine Mother, who is the Goddess of Wisdom, has power to turn the most learned scholar into the veriest worm that crawls upon the earth."

To attain even a single ray of light from the Divine Mother, what did Sri Ramakrishna advise? The answer is: self-surrender, solitude and prayer and meditation. The words which Buddha applied to his own teaching may almost without change be applied to the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna: "Just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, just so has my doctrine and discipline only one flavour—the flavour of emancipation." Let this be lost sight of even for a moment, and no matter what imposing paraphernalia of popular activities you are taking shelter under, you will make the world look

like a marriage pavilion where the pipers are playing and the guests have arrived and the feast is getting ready but only the bridegroom has disappeared.

Now to conclude, like a bee collecting honey, Sri Ramakrishna went to every flower of religion in the world. Nay, he collected honey from the very stones, also from everything that existed—*Bhuteshu Bhuteshu vichitya*. Unlike the bee he drank deeply of the honey and passed on the nectar to the whole world, for his supply was endless. Such is the state of the supreme Rishis. It has been described as follows in the Mundaka Upanishad: (III. 2, 5).

"The Rishis, having attained everything in the shape of their own self, have become soaked in Jnana, free from passion, and full of peace. These sages, having approached the omnipresent Supreme Being by every possible mode of approach, have entered into the inmost core of their own being, and have thus entered into the whole universe itself." Such is their nature, such the Shakti that dwells in these Paramahansas. Where shall we find this Shakti? Take refuge in the feet of the Guru, and the Shakti will descend on you and you will be merged in bliss here and now, not elsewhere, not in a mere hereafter.





## TRUTH IN MODERN EUROPE

*By V. Subramanya Iyer*

[Mr. V. Subramanya Aiyar, the retired Registrar of the Mysore University, is one of the noted philosophers of modern India. He was the only Indian representative to attend the International Congress of Philosophy held recently in Paris. After the Congress he travelled extensively in Europe, visiting centres of culture and interviewing distinguished thinkers, professors and scientists. The following suggestive article is the answer that Mr. Aiyer gave in reply to the question, 'What is the matter with Europe to-day?' on the basis of his recent experiences in modern Europe.]

**URING** my recent visit to Europe in 1937, I have had the inestimable privilege of meeting, not only at the Inter-national Congress of Philosophy in Paris but also at other places, eminent professors as well as highly cultured men and women. Besides philosophers, I came into contact with scientists, such as physicists, chemists, biologists, mathematicians, astronomers, physicians, psychologists, psycho-analysts and sociologists, as also with authorities on ancient civilizations and cultures, on history, politics, economics, law, military science, commerce and industry, religion and theology, ethics, æsthetics and especially metaphysics, over seventy in number. Their talks left on me the impression that they all possessed an intense love of Truth and that all were supremely eager to pursue it. But this love and this pursuit were and are confined chiefly to the spheres of their respective fields of activity or thought. Excepting to a few, the question of Truth in regard to the *whole* of experience or life seemed to make little appeal. Some of them relegated such an enquiry to the world of the mentally defective, if not of the insane. No doubt there exist in Europe colleges and professors of philosophy whose object is to interpret the *whole* of life or experience. But even they are still unable to free

themselves from the influence of their environment which emphasises some particular aspect of experience, such as the social, political or economic. Even scientists often preferred to keep away from philosophy as much as possible. The majority appeared to hold an 'ultimate' or 'all-comprehending' Truth to be a chimera, if not meaningless. When it was pointed out that 'compartmental' Truths change and are modified from time to time, and that they as such are conflicting or contradictory even in their own spheres, the reply came that an unchanging Truth was an impossibility, at the present stage of human knowledge, and that the Hegelian Absolute or the Marxian Unity was only a *theoretical* concept but not a *practical* or *stable* goal that could be attained in life. Not a few still believed that Truth was best understood by those who possessed power and prosperity.

When it was next urged by me that such compartmental conceptions of Truth led to 'good' only of a partial and temporary character, and that a view of it based on experience covering longer periods or wider area could yield better results, more beneficial to man, they admitted the reasonableness of the argument but stuck to their conviction of the *practical* impossibility of attaining an All-com-

prehending Truth. They acknowledged that such Truth as has a bearing on the whole of life or existence does press on the mind of every one, sometime or other. But this is disposed of in either of two ways. The great majority find the easiest solution in some religious faith, which gives hopes of its realisation *after death*. The rest ignore the problem altogether, as unattainable in life, if not meaningless.

#### CRITERION OF TRUTH

Setting aside the question of an all-comprehending or ultimate Truth, whenever I put the question, "How do you know that in any field your enquiry leads you to Truth?", the invariable reply was that the results in actual or practical life were the strongest proof. And where no practical results could be attained at all or immediately, one's own 'belief' or 'faith' even in matters of Science was, they said, the sole criterion. Here, when I pointed out that belief and faith led to differences so serious as to invite conflict, nay, even wars, and that religious beliefs led to more bloodshed than political or other beliefs, they said that as a criterion of Truth, nothing higher than belief or faith was yet known to man, and that for the rest we must submit to Nature's laws, whether we like them or not.

#### MEANING OF TRUTH

Almost every thoughtful person I met, I asked what was meant in Europe by Truth. A number of interpretations of Truth were given, each of which differed from others, though each was found satisfactory from the standpoint of the particular sphere to which one's thought was confined for the time being. Further, thinkers re-

fer to 'absolute', 'relative', 'subjective', 'objective', 'impersonal', 'theoretical', 'practical' and various other kinds of Truth, in which the qualifying words can have no meaning unless that of Truth by itself were known. So when the question was raised by me as to the meaning of Truth independently of any compartmental limitations, in other words, as to the *common feature* of all the compartmental Truths, I was told that it was useless to pursue such an enquiry and that the question was as old as the world. There has thus been no advance on the exclamation of Pontius Pilate made nearly twenty centuries ago which is thus recorded: "And Pilate said, what is truth? but would not wait for an answer." The inconclusiveness of the several attempts made by philosophers in this matter was also referred to by many.

#### BEST INDEX OF PRESENT EUROPEAN ATTITUDE

The highest prize awarded by the most thoughtful men in Europe is known as the Nobel Prize. It encourages best the pursuit of compartmental Truth in several important fields of knowledge. The impetus given by it to science in particular has been twofold. While modern science has done immense 'good' to the world so far as the *individual* is concerned, it has done incalculable harm so far as communities or nationalities are affected. It has encouraged war and slaughter more than anything else. It has further increased the struggle for existence within Europe as well as outside, in several ways. Had the Nobel Prize only kept in view the pursuit of not merely Truth compartmental, but also Truth universal, regarding the whole of experi-

ence as the highest Truth, it would have contributed to the well-being of mankind in general also. For Truth that covers the *whole* of life belongs to the province of philosophy, which alone can help us to *evaluate* human action, individual or collective, from the standpoint of the common well-being of humanity.

Excepting in those universities where philosophy is studied as a part of a course, the number pursuing this subject alone is fast dwindling. The Truth of science, not of philosophy, is what attracts the great majority, though it is evident that science is productive of as much evil as good. Even religious Truth which is thought to be an antidote to the evils of science, is found to be powerless in checking national or communal animosities, though it is so valuable as affording individual satisfaction.

Some thinkers, realising the difficulty of solving the problem of Truth, have thought it necessary to assign a subordinate place to Truth, and to set up other standards or values. But this point was nowhere brought up for discussion.

#### INDIA'S ATTEMPT

At last I placed before them for their consideration and examination the effort made by India to attain to a clearer and more consistent meaning of Truth and to test it in life. But inasmuch as Ultimate Truth was for most of them a chimera, they thought that India was labouring under a delusion. They further held that a nation that has been proverbially passive so long, whose greatness has always been in the past, and which is ever enamoured of mysticism, cannot be expected to have the capacity to think vigorously on matters

rational. In India, they added, even the most cultured—let alone the masses—were still in the stage of 're-velling in poetry', 'quoting scriptures' for everything, and finding delight in blindly 'copying' others. These preconceptions, I could overcome in some cases. But the difficulty that was more formidable was the natural inability of the majority in Europe to concentrate their mind. Restlessness and impatience have been among the most noticeable features in their daily life. So the attitude of some reminded me of the well-known saying, "He that speaketh the Truth to the unprepared (may I add, to concentrate) is a liar in his own despite." For I could not get some of them to understand the meaning of what is known as 'sleep'. And I had to divert the talk to less serious topics such as would not tax the mind so much.

I should, however, be not only failing in my duty but even be highly ungrateful if I did not state here that a number of the most distinguished and thoughtful men whom I had the good fortune to meet did readily see my point of view and express their whole-hearted appreciation of the Indian conception that ultimate Truth must be what is beyond contradiction and beyond all possibility of contradiction—beyond doubt and beyond all possibility of doubt. Further, they acknowledged its value in practical life also.

Among those that evinced such interest were persons who not merely possessed the highest order of intelligence but also combined with it the longest experience of life. To mention some of the names, in France, Prof. Henri Bergson and Prof. Lalande; in Germany Prof. Max Planck

and Prof. Thurnwald ; in Italy Prof. Gentile ; in Switzerland Prof. Jung ; in Austria Prof. Giegar ; and especially in England Sir James Jean, Sir Arthur Eddington, Prof. Julian Huxley, Prof. MacMurray and Prof. Muirhead are persons who evinced such interest. Among the political personages deeply interested in philosophic Truth, I cannot refrain from referring to the Marquis of Zetland and Viscount Samuel in England, and H. H. the Archduke Eugen in Austria. Many of them were so good as to observe that in seeking and pursuing philosophic Truth, India could certainly lay greater claim to the benefit of longer experience combined with deep and concentrated thought than modern Europe.

I have left the European continent with the feeling that if leaders of thought in Europe—Europe with its superior knowledge of science, its admirable skill in matters of organisation, its great ability in diverting energy of every kind into the more practical and useful channels, and above all with its power to influence other nations in

a smaller or a greater degree—could only make up their minds seriously to grapple with the problem of the Truth of the whole of experience, in addition to pursuing compartmental Truth, and what is more, could ascertain its basis in, and bearing on, actual or practical life, beginning with a complete analysis of the meaning of the term 'I' and of the word 'whole' when applied to experience—Europe would be doing the greatest good of a permanent character, not merely to herself but to all mankind. For the Ultimate or Highest Truth eliminates all contradictions, and thus makes for harmony and peace, internal as well as external, by the elimination of harmful conflict of every kind, *not after death* as in religion, but *in this life*, this mundane life of ours, as in science.

May Europe as well as the rest of the world have the determination to seek truth unqualified, will always be the prayer of one who, however feebly, seeks to represent those that have made the pursuit of Truth, Truth in its totality, their aim and end of existence.

## THE WAY TO THE DIVINE

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[Swami Yatiswarananda, the author of 'The Universal Prayers' and 'The Divine Life', is the representative of the Ramakrishna Order teaching the gospel of Vedānta in the Continent of Europe. In the following article, which forms a class-talk of his, some practical hints helpful for the religious aspirants are given.]

"Like the sharp edge of a razor is the Path of Self-Realisation, so the wise say, difficult to cross and hard to tread."—*Katha Upanishad*.

### MORAL LIFE A STEPPING STONE TO SELF-REALISATION

**T**HE Vedantin says, "It is not enough if you do selfless acts and lead a moral life. It is not

enough if you scrupulously perform your duties. Something more is needed. You must attain to the highest Divine Knowledge and thereby realise the highest goal yourself."

Selfless acts and moral practices are only a means to the higher life of the spirit. They are a stepping stone for bringing about the necessary purification of the mind and understanding, without which the highest Knowledge is not attainable by anybody. A strictly moral life, selfless activity in the interest of others, holy studies and spiritual practices, are needed to remove all the impurities lying hidden in our mind. This is the only way of attaining the highest illumination in the end.

#### THE WAYS OF THE MAN OF KNOWLEDGE

At present we identify ourselves with the body, whereas the man of Knowledge knows that the body is only a temporary dwelling place, not his true self. It is true that he too acts and performs what we call duties, but he is ever the witness of his acts. He is at all times fully conscious of his non-identity with the body. He never believes himself to be a man or a woman, a youth or an old man. He knows himself to be different from and eternally beyond the body and mind even. He is conscious that he is the Self. He may have the feeling that he acts, but this feeling is not like our feeling. The feeling persists only in a highly attenuated form, without any trace of real identification of the true self with its physical adjuncts. The ego of such a man of Knowledge is like a shadow, and cannot bind him at all.

Unless we have achieved perfect control of ourselves, it is not possible for us to understand what it means to be a man of realisation. First we should become perfectly non-attached to everybody and to everything through perfect control over our body

and mind. Until we have attained outer and inner purity, and until the highest Knowledge has been attained, we cannot understand the ways of the man of Knowledge.

#### TEST OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

He alone can realise the 'actionless Self,' the True Being, as the only Reality, who has purified his body and mind through perfect ethical culture. Otherwise any self-deluded man can pretend to be 'actionless', and thereby simply muddle up his impure chaotic brain. Merely claiming to have attained samesightedness will not do. A man must be put to the test and must be able to pass the test also. For the Bhagavad Gita declares of such a man that 'he, with the mind concentrated by Yoga and viewing all things with the eye of evenness, beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.' When anybody claims to be a man of Knowledge, and at the same time passionately seeks sense enjoyments, feels distracted by the changing conditions of life, and rejoices or grieves through attachment, then one may conclude that there is something seriously wrong with his so-called Knowledge. The perfected soul does not care to run after the transient human relationships and momentary, enjoyments. His undimmed vision of the Truth prevents him always from turning to what is false and illusory.

That is why the aspirant who is on the path should prevent his mind from running after all human attachments and all the other vanities of the world, although it may entail a terrible struggle with his lower propensities. For Christ says, "Everyone that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or child-



ren or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting" (St. Matthew, XIX:29).

We should never light-heartedly and thoughtlessly pass over the teachings of the Great Divine Personalities, but should rather ponder over them deeply and then put their instruction into practice.

#### FACE THE TRUTH

Let us not cover unpleasant realities with fragrant flowers. We must learn to face facts as they are, and see them dispassionately. The body is a very dirty thing after all. So let us get disgusted with it and all its enjoyments. We should not feel pained to think like this. An unpleasant truth is better than a pleasant falsehood. The body is full of filthy secretions and is subject to decay. So let us give up all attachment and clinging to our own body as well as to that of others. Once we realise the true nature of the body, all desire to come in touch with other bodies, however beautiful their outward form, will go in no time. The body, however, is to be taken care of by all means and used as an instrument for promoting our true well-being as well as that of others.

Everything becomes simple the moment we become simple, and everything seems difficult so long as we remain complex. Realisation is an easy thing for him who is properly trained and qualified. Such a competent aspirant can come face to face with Truth and directly perceive it as it is. It is not an ideal which cannot be realised or which always eludes our grasp. Only one should make the spiritual ideal real and living, then it ceases to be mere ideal.

#### SEEK GOD FIRST

During the period of our spiritual practices we should think only of God and ourselves, and forget everything else. We should try to rid ourselves of all attachments, even what we feel for our nearest and dearest. So Christ says, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (St. Luke, XIV:26-27).

We ought not to worry too much about anything other than God. We should live with the Divine idea alone. This, of course, is not the ultimate stage to be reached, but it is a very necessary preliminary to its attainment. Ultimately we must realise the same Divine Being in all, and learn to love all exclusively for the sake of the Divine dwelling in them all.

First we must learn to see the Cosmic Being at the back of the Personal, and then we may come to see the Absolute at the back of the Cosmic. The Holy Personality, the Incarnation or the Personal God, takes us, as it were, by the hand and reveals to us step by step the higher Knowledge. The realisation of the Absolute — the Transcendental — lies always through the realisation of the Immanent Divine Principle. No one can take a long jump and reach the Absolute without the necessary preparation, however great may be its appeal to the intellect.

The more we succeed in creating within ourselves a cosmic outlook, the more we feel that there is neither man nor woman, neither subject nor ob-

ject, but that all is the One manifesting itself through different names and forms.

We must learn to see Him alone even in all awful and terrible things, without ever allowing the awful or the terrible aspects to overpower our mind. He is even in the gross, impure, awful, vulgar things, but all gross, impure, awful, vulgar things must never be permitted to affect our mind or to take possession of it. Darkness becomes visible by the light it reflects.

To the extent to which we succeed in seeing the One alone, we forget all limitations and pairs of opposites—the whole play of the phenomenal world. And we can do this only if we see that everything else but God is insignificant and of secondary importance, a mere shadowy, unsubstantial passing show. God is the only Reality at the back of everything.

#### BE ALWAYS WATCHFUL

If we be really watchful and earnest in trying to lead the life of a sincere aspirant, we would notice all the movements of our mind, all the thoughts and impulses that rise in it. Ordinarily we are so dull and so careless about all this that we only become aware of the perilous state we are in after the horse of our mind has thrown us into a ditch. But before reaching it, it has gone all the way to the ditch quite unperceived because of our carelessness and lack of right striving.

Hold the reins tight. All accidents in the path are due to carelessness. Be on your guard. Be always careful, always watchful. Never leave your mind unwatched, not even a single minute. This is the general

rule for all aspirants, whatever be the path they follow.

#### PRAY FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

There is a fine prayer that says : "O Lord, do Thou take charge of the helm. My six boatmen (the passions) are very turbulent. Take my boat to the other shore. Do Thou become my ferryman."

Sri Krishna has nothing to say to the thoughtless idler and to the lukewarm half-hearted aspirant who are not willing to pay the full price for that which they want. Real spirituality is dynamic, not passive. So Sri Krishna's message is full of true manliness, virility and strength. And without these, coupled with strict ethical culture and steady spiritual practice, there cannot be anything that can be called religion.

There is nothing so precious as discrimination and dispassion and an intense yearning for God. So Sri Ramakrishna says, "You must ever discriminate the Real from the unreal, ever reason that He alone is Real and that everything else is transient. Always pray to Him with a yearning heart."

In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord does not take part in the fight, but He is the friend and counsellor of Arjuna—the fighter. Let not the Lord Himself fight, but let Him give us the incentive and strength to fight, always. And let Him be our friend and charioteer as He was to Arjuna.

#### TRUE FREEDOM

Only the perfectly non-attached and pure can be real workers, for they alone do not work like slaves driven by their personal affections and aversions, and they alone do not bring bondage and delusion and attachment to others.

Real freedom consists in freedom from love and hate, affection and aversion, and in perfect sense-control. As soon as our body and mind are really controlled, we feel even physically that life is worth living, because it is then that we cease to be slaves and puppets of personal love and desire, and become capable of rising to the true stature of a human being.

If the aspirant steadily tries to feel the Divine Presence within and to forget every other thing, no great dangers will arise from people or objects, and temptations will slowly dwindle off until they leave him completely.

#### THE DIVINE MORE REAL THAN THE WORLD

We should closely examine ourselves and find out whether we really want God. If we desire the love and affection of other persons, or the things of the world, we can do without Him. And if we feel quite happy and satisfied when these are granted to us, it is a sure sign that we do not want God. In such a case we have nothing to complain if we do not get Him. So every aspirant should ask himself now and then whether it is really God that he wants or something else. And if it is really God he can be sure that he will come to Him, for God always comes to the devotee who really seeks Him and Him alone. Says Sri Ramakrishna, "If the devotee moves towards God one step, He comes towards him ten steps."

The whole point is that we cannot take all this dream of the phenomenal to be absolutely real and, at the same time, think of God. This cinema-

show we see here, is not the Reality. Christ says, "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me shall find it" (St. Matthew, X:38-39).

The way to Divine realisation lies through self effort and striving. Immortality can be attained only by one who becomes dead to all worldly attachments even while living in the body.

Our whole trouble is that we believe this phenomenal world and all the people we see in it to be intensely real, and two realities cannot find room in us. So, first of all, a void is to be created in the heart of every aspirant, and once this is done, he can fill this void with the Divine.

The true sages and men of Knowledge do not trouble themselves about the multiplicity of the world. They see the One alone in the many, and they think of, and care for, the One alone. They find their greatest pleasure in Him, a pleasure never to be had through personal affection or sense-enjoyment. And the cessation of all desires means the realisation of Divine Consciousness. When all attachments and loves fall away and die, the soul realises its own eternal Divine glory.

"He who sees Me in all things, and sees all things in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I, the Divine, become separated from him. He who worships Me, dwelling in all beings, being established in unity, whatever his mode of life, that Yogi abides in Me" (Bhagavad Gita).



## MAN AND THE WORLD

*By Prof. Akshoy Kumar Banerjea, M.A.*

[Mr. Banerjea deals with the fundamental philosophical problem of the inter-relation between the knowing principle and the external universe, and shows how the doctrine of levels or stand-points of reality can alone help in getting over the opposition involved in these two conceptions.]

### I

**T**HE relation between man and the world is a great puzzle to human understanding. Man stands face to face with a world, boundless in space and time and infinite in diversities and relations. All his interests are inseparably bound up with the circumstances presented by the world. Many of these circumstances are of such a nature that, though his vital interests are affected by them, he can exercise no control over them, and they occur independently of him and his requirements. There are, however, some which he can effectively control by the efforts of his powers of thought, will and action, and can exploit for the fulfilment of his desires and the realisation of his ideals.

But on the whole he feels that the world is something foreign and external to himself. He is a self-conscious and self-determining personality, having freedom of thought, feeling, will and action ; while the world is an unconscious entity, having no power of thought and feeling, no self-determined will and action, and all its phenomena are what they must inevitably be in accordance with the inexorable laws of natural causation. He has a moral character, which makes him distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, ought and ought not ; but the world has no moral character and there is no room for such distinctions among its pheno-

mena. Man has an ideal of life, which he has the right and power to realise by dint of his own free efforts in this world ; but the world itself is unconscious and without any ideal, and it is going on blindly and aimlessly in its course in accordance with its laws.

This consciousness of the opposition between the nature of man and the nature of the objective world has given rise to serious logical difficulties in the way of accounting for the close relation between man and the world. How can two such entities of opposite characters come in such intimate contact with each other ? How can man acquire true knowledge of the world and the world reflect itself in its true character upon the human mind ? How can the human consciousness and the unconscious matter of the world be associated with and interact upon each other ? How can man realise the ideal of his moral nature in a world, all the phenomena of which are necessarily determined by unchangeable and inviolable laws of physical nature ? How can the freedom of man, upon which his moral and spiritual life depends, be reconciled to the necessity of the material world, which is the field of the exercise of his freedom ? The problem of knowledge, the problem of morality and religion, the problem of the ascertainment of the real nature of the human self and the objective world, —all these appear insoluble on the

assumption of the independent existence and opposite characters of man and the world.

Philosophers have imagined various hypothesis for the solution of these problems. Some have sought to explain away the distinctive characteristics of man, to regard his consciousness of the freedom of thought and action and his consciousness of moral and religious rights and duties as unreal and illusory, and to resolve the human nature into one of the complex products of the physical world. Others have denied the external and independent existence of the objective world and have attempted to explain it as a system of subjective ideas. Some have invoked the aid of God to bring about the relation between the two, and others have been contented with speaking of Paraffelism or Pre-established Harmony. In this way various devices have been resorted to and various theories propounded for the solution of the riddle of the relation between the self-conscious and self-determining moral and spiritual and rational nature of man, and the externally determined, unconscious, non-moral and non-rational material nature of the objective world. Each theory has been sought to be established by the refutation of all the others and has been in its turn refuted by all the rest. In truth no device has been able to establish itself on unassailable logical grounds. Many sincere pursuers of truth have confessed the inability of logic to solve the problem.

It is as futile to try to derive the self-controlled cognitive, ideal-seeking, moral, spiritual and rational consciousness, essential to human nature, from the objective physical world in accordance with the physical

laws, as it is to reduce the external world, which supplies the data to human experience and the materials for the development and self-manifestation of man's subjective and moral and spiritual consciousness, into mere ideas or self-projections of this consciousness. To assert that the human consciousness and the unconscious world are associated with each other by an unaccountable Pre-established Harmony or by some contrivance of God is no explanation at all.

All these insuperable difficulties owe their origin to the fundamental assumption that spirit and matter, the knower and the knowable, the subject and the object, the moral agent and the field of its activity, are essentially distinct entities, having in their ultimate nature no points of community between them, and that freedom and necessity, the voluntary pursuit of an ideal and the government by law, the transcendence of time and space and the existence in time and place, cannot be compatible with each other. This assumption itself is dogmatic and unwarrantable. It has no basis in experience. It really amounts to substantialisation of abstraction.

## II

Let us investigate this problem in some detail. In order to prove that the human spirit and the objective world are essentially distinct entities having originally independent existence and fundamentally opposite characters, it is necessary to show that the one can exist or can be definitely conceived as existing absolutely without any relation to the other. But such a definite conception of the one without any reference to the other appears to be impossible. The knower

and the known, the doer and the deed, the experiencer and the experienced, the illuminator and the illumined, are essentially bound up with each other, and neither has any meaning apart from relation to the other. If the human spirit is to be characterised as the knower, the doer, the enjoyer, the experiencer, the illuminator, etc., it at once involves the notion of the object of knowledge, action, enjoyment, experience, illumination, etc. The character of the subject is determined by the character of the object. Self-consciousness, self-luminosity, self-enjoyment, self-determination, etc., also can have no meaning, unless a division of subject and object is recognised in its own nature.

The objective world also cannot be conceived as having any character of its own apart from relation to the knowing, feeling, acting subject. Extension and duration, co-existence and succession, motion and rest, unity and plurality, heat and light, sound and touch, weight and density, attraction and repulsion,—in short, all the so-called primary and secondary qualities, all the qualitative and quantitative relations, which constitute the nature of the objective realities—are mental concepts and represent the diverse ways in which the human spirit receives, conceives and is affected by them. Apart from these, the objective world cannot be conceived as having any character, or even any existence. To give it any such name as matter or thing-in-itself or pure being or indeterminate substance to indicate what it is apart from, and independently of, the relation to the knowing, feeling and acting subject, does not in the least improve the situation, because either such a name should convey some definite meaning to the

human understanding, in which case it must be the expression of a mental concept, and hence the relativity remains unavoidable, or it should be a meaningless word, which cannot represent the character of any reality.

Thus, the objective world must necessarily mean to the human understanding the world as it is mirrored on the subjective nature of man and characterised by the attributes which the human mind discovers in it. Man also becomes conscious of himself and of his own nature as reflected on the objective world. Each is what it is in relation to the other. The character of each is determined by the other, and neither can be asserted to have any character or existence apart from the other.

We experience the world of material objects as possessed of colours, sounds, tastes, odours, and tactual properties; but these cannot be conceived as having any existence except by reference to the senses of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Had these been absent in our subjective nature, there would be no light or colour, no sound or taste or smell, no heat or cold or hardness or softness, no distinction of solid or liquid or gaseous states, in the universe of our experience. Even the imagination or conception of them as existing outside the scope of our experience would be impossible. If our senses had been differently constituted, the world would have been possessed of altogether different characteristics to us, and those characteristics would have been accepted by us as pertaining to the real nature of the objective universe. On the other hand, the presence of these senses in us also could not have been recognised in the absence of those properties in the objects,

producing impressions upon and being received by them. Thus the senses and the sensible objects are essentially inter-related, and neither can be conceived as having any character or existence apart from the other.

Similarly, there could be no conception of space and time, and the world could not be experienced as consisting of phenomena with spatial and temporal properties, if the experiencing subject had not been finite and limited and had not been under the necessity to receive its objects in order of succession and simultaneity. If the subject could experience the entire objective existence by a single act of intuition and this intuition had no beginning or end or change, there would be no notion of time and space in connection with the nature of the world. The experience of unity and plurality, internality and externality, succession and co-existence, rest and motion, inertia and impenetrability, different shapes and sizes and magnitudes, etc., is dependent upon the finite, limited and relative character of the subjective mind and senses. On the other hand, the finitude, limitedness and relativity of the mind and senses also could not be recognised and would have no meaning except by reference to time and space and the limitations imposed by them.

Again, we perceive the existence of various forces operating in the world and transforming themselves into sensuous phenomena, and many scientific observers and thinkers recognise these forces as the real objects appearing in the forms of phenomena to our senses. But if we had not the consciousness of the exercise of will and effort in our subjective nature, we would have no experience of power or force in the objective world. On the other hand,

in the absence of the experience of resistance from outside, we would not be conscious of any power or effort within ourselves. The active aspect of human consciousness and the conception of the world as a system of forces necessarily involve reference to each other.

Moreover, if the laws of Identity, Contradiction and Excluded Middle, the laws of causality and sufficient ground, and the principle of the unity of experiences, had not been inherent in the nature of human reason, there would be no conception of the objective world as a unitary system, no recognition of the plurality of objects as parts of a connected whole and the differences and relations among them, no notion of causal connections within this universe, no idea of the reign of laws in it. These laws and principles also have no meaning apart from objective reference, and their *a priori* presence in the subjective reason could not be discovered in the absence of the relation between the subject and the objective world.

Further, on account of the presence of moral and æsthetic elements in our subjective consciousness, we experience some objects as good and others as evil, some as beautiful and others as ugly, some as what ought to be and others as what ought not to be. The moral sense and the æsthetic sense pertaining to our nature discover moral and æsthetic qualities in the nature of objects almost in the same way as our senses of sight, smell, etc., detect colours, odours, etc., in the objects.

The growth of moral consciousness is dependent upon the nature of the world-order, which presents itself to consciousness and awakens and develops it. This experience of the ideal

involved in the actual and this conception of the world as a moral order are neither imaginary nor illusory, but the natural product of the contact between the moral nature of the subject and the moral quality of the objective world.

Moreover, it is because man is a spiritual being and the objective world is reflected upon his spiritual consciousness, that the diverse finite transitory objects of sensuous experience are necessarily conceived and interpreted by him as bound together by some band of spiritual unity, which transcends the temporal and spatial limitations which pertain to those objects and which without losing its essential unitary character exists as immanent in them. It is the unity, infinity and eternity of the spiritual nature of the subject, which seeks for and discovers unity behind all diversities, infinity behind all finite objects, eternity behind all temporal phenomena, spiritual self behind all material embodiments. In the absence of this spiritual aspect of human consciousness, the conception of the boundless diversified world as the organically related self-manifestation of one infinite eternal spiritual principle would not have been attained by man, and in the absence of such a constitution of the world system, this aspect of consciousness could not have been asserted and developed and fulfilled itself.

Thus the objective universe, with which man is and can possibly be acquainted, is what it is in relation to the nature of man as the subject, and the subjective human nature also is what it is in relation to this universe. The human nature becomes conscious of itself as reflected on the world and of the nature of world as reflected on

itself. Man as the subject and the world as the object are organically united with each other. Each acts as the mirror of the other. Neither can be said to have any separate existence and character independently of the other. If we try to form any conception of either of them as unrelated to the other, each becomes a differenceless attributeless characterless void.

### III

Now it is the nature of human reason to reflect upon all the diverse kinds of experiences which are obtained as the result of the relation between the different aspects of the subjective character of man and the corresponding aspects of the objective character of the world, and to unify them by means of general comprehensive conceptions. In forming such conceptions reason is influenced by the particular points of view or planes of outlook, from which it looks upon those experiences and unifies them. This leads it to attach the central position to some particular department of experiences and to interpret the other departments in relation to it. The influence of this plane of outlook upon the conception of the universe is generally ignored by philosophers.

When reason moves habitually in the sensuous plane, it regards the sensuous experiences as representing the true or essential character of man and the world, and seeks to unify the moral, aesthetic and spiritual experiences with them as the centre. The law of phenomenal causation, in which there is an external relationship between the cause and the effect, is then regarded as the supreme law determining the course of the objective world. The values of things are



chiefly determined by reference to the sensuous pleasures and pains experienced in our sensuous nature through contact with them. Economics becomes the chief concern of man's active life.

When reason looks upon the same world of experience from the viewpoint of the vital plane, it discovers the presence of a life-power, either in the potential or in the kinetic state, everywhere in the universe. Those who attain this plane of outlook are strongly convinced that here they form a far deeper and truer acquaintance with the real nature of the world of experience than in the sensuous plane. This plane represents a higher stage of the development of the subjective nature of man, and it is consequently attained by a comparatively smaller number of men.

When this world is viewed from the moral plane, it appears as essentially a moral order, governed by the moral law. The law of phenomenal causation appears in this plane as subordinate to, and governed by, the principle of morality. The law of Karma is a formulation of this law of moral causation. Everything that is and appears to sense experience, is a particular form of the manifestation of what it ought to be. The 'ought' is the regulator of 'is'. This moral outlook generally leads to the conception of one moral Governor of the world, who is regarded as regulating all its phenomena in accordance with the moral ideal inherent in His character.

Similarly, when reason dwells and moves habitually in the æsthetic plane, the ideal of Beauty is conceived as the central dominating principle of the objective universe, and all other aspects are regarded as partial expressions and embodiments of this

ideal. It is from the standpoint of the æsthetic ideal that all phenomena of the diverse orders of experience are judged. With the progress of this outlook, the world appears more and more beautiful,—the subjective consciousness enjoys beauty within and without.

The men who attain a predominantly spiritual outlook, the spiritual aspect of whose nature reigns over the sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic aspects, get a spiritual insight into the nature of the objective world, and view all its phenomena from the spiritual standpoint, experience the world as a spiritual order, as a harmonious and beautiful system of the varied self-manifestations of the one eternal infinite absolute spirit. In their experience the Unity is more real than the diversities, the Infinite and Eternal is more real than the finite transitory objects, the Absolute Spirit is more real than the related mental and material things. To them the One Infinite Eternal Absolute Spirit is the source and the substance, the sustainer and the regulator, the ideal and the end of the world of sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic experiences. In the nature of that Spirit the knower and the knowable, the enjoyer and the enjoyable, the doer and the doable, the actual and the ideal, the seeker and sought are eternally identified. When the human consciousness rises to the highest spiritual plane and is blessed with the deepest spiritual experience, man realises himself to be identical with the Spirit and finds the objective world also identical with the Spirit and hence with himself. Man and the world are experienced as one. He finds nothing outside of himself and does not become conscious of himself as dis-

tinguished from anything. It is one blissful spiritual experience, in which the experienter and the experienced are not distinguishable,—one spiritual enjoyment, in which the enjoyer and the enjoyable, the lover and the beloved, are not distinguishable. In this experience, Truth, Beauty and Goodness are one; Knowledge, Emotion and Will are one; the Object and the Subject are one; the process and its fulfilment are one. This experience is the negation of nothing, but the fulfilment of everything.

When the human reason, after having got the taste of losing itself, so to say, in this Absolute Experience, comes down to the consciousness of its distinguished individuality with the indelible impression of that experience characterising its entire outlook, its mode of reflecting upon and interpreting the nature of the objects of sensuous, vital, moral and æsthetic experiences is radically changed. It finds all these objects as emerging from, sustained by, existing for and merging in the One Infinite and Eternal (spaceless and timeless), Absolute and Perfect Subject-objectless Spirit, and recognises the presence of that Spirit in all the finite transitory relative imperfect objects, appearing as such to the diverse aspects of the subjective consciousness. These objects seem to be the appearances or partial self-manifestations of the Spirit. The same Absolute Spirit is recognised as revealing, experiencing, and enjoying itself as a plurality of subjective consciousness and a plurality of objective realities, distinguishable from, but inseparably related to, each other, and with diverse orders of specific characteristics determined by their relations to each other. This apparent self-

diversification and self-manifestation of the Absolute Spirit in the names and forms of innumerable finite spirits and objects, and the process of determining and regulating their natures and courses are not, from this point of view, governed by any Law of Causation, physical, mental or moral; they are the modes of the self-expression and self-enjoyment of Its perfectly free spiritual nature,—they are Its *Leela*. The Law of Causation and the Law of Karma, the physical, psychological, biological and moral laws, are all conceived as the modes of Its *Leela*,—the methods, as we observe them, of its self-expression and self-enjoyment.

Though there is no rational ground for condemning and rejecting any of the aforesaid planes of outlook and modes of interpreting the nature of the subject and the object,—man and his world,—as absolutely misrepresenting their true character, and for regarding any of the data and products of the different orders of well-regulated normal human experience as absolutely unreal; still the spiritual plane of experience and the mode of interpreting all orders of experience from this point of view is conceived as the highest and the best and as representing most truly the ultimate nature of man and his world, because it gives the utmost satisfaction to and confers the most permanent blessedness upon the thought, feeling and will of man. It delivers man from the painful consciousness of imperfection, limitation, finitude and bondage, and it bestows upon him the blissful consciousness of the realisation of perfect truth and goodness and beauty, perfect freedom, eternity and infinity in himself.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His 'Aphorisms on Divine Love' forms one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRA 7.

The description of Bhakti as the state of supreme spiritual realisation ends with the sixth aphorism. Narada now proceeds to clear some misunderstandings which may arise from his characterisation of Bhakti in aphorism 2 as supreme Love. Ordinarily Prema or love is understood to mean the tender feeling that persons of opposite sexes feel for one another. In the next aphorism he shows reason why Bhakti should not be identified with sex love, or for the matter of that, with any kind of worldly desire.

सा न कामयमाना निरोधरूपत्वात् ॥

सा That Bhakti (which is described in aphorism 2 as Prema or supreme Love) न कामयमाना is not of the nature of desire (especially sex love): निरोधरूपत्वात् being a form of renunciation.

Bhakti (described before as Prema or Love) is not of the nature of desire (sex love), because it is a form of renunciation.

**Notes :** The reason for this distinction drawn between Bhakti or love of God, and Kama or love of worldly objects, especially sex attraction, is that in the former, the mind is withheld from flowing towards objects of senses. Thus in Bhakti the mind is

educated to renounce sense-objects, while in Kama it is allowed to get engrossed in them. Being therefore of a contradictory nature, Bhakti cannot be equated with desire.

From the point of view of ancient psychology, this reason for drawing a distinction between Bhakti and Kama may be sufficient. But some modern psychologists would not be satisfied that this apparent difference in the object of interest in the two forms of love is sufficient ground for giving spiritual intuition a higher basis than man's instinctive energies which manifest as desires. There has therefore been a consistent attempt made in modern times to find a sexual origin for the so-called higher experiences of saints and mystics. According to modern psychology, an expression of desire need not always imply the flow of the mind towards an external object. When a person fails to obtain satisfaction for his instinctive cravings in the real world outside, owing to social taboos, keenness of competitive life, etc., his desires take a subterranean course. Unknown to the person, they remain submerged in the unconscious levels of the mind, and with added force derived from their suppression by mental censorship, they seek satisfaction in the world of phantasy, accompanied by various abnormal and unhealthy mental symptoms. Many a psychologist

is inclined to classify the subjective experiences or spiritual intuitions of the saints and mystics along with these abnormal mental manifestations, and attribute them to the same cause, namely, the suppression of fundamental instincts, especially the sexual.

This theory of the sexual genesis of spiritual intuition is based upon the following facts :—

1. Very often there is seen a correspondence between the setting in of puberty in man, and the experience of conversion, which is generally taken as the dawn of the spiritual sense.

2. In all religions and schools of thought emphasising on mystic experience, there are very strong sex taboos, and abstinence from sexual indulgences is held to be an unavoidable condition for the efflorescence of this mystical faculty.

3. The so-called higher experiences of saints, it is held, can be interpreted in terms of suppressed sex, as in the case of many forms of mental abnormalities.

4. In the writings of almost all the important mystics, sex symbolisms have been used to give expression to their aspirations and realisations.

On the basis of these and other facts, spiritual love and experience are explained by psychologists as a suppressed expression of sexuality, which is by common consent *Kama par excellence*.

The following remarks may be made by way of criticism of this theory :—

1. The doctrine of correspondence between puberty and the experience of conversion is too simple a generalisation, as it ignores all data that is inconvenient to it. Thus there are many cases of famous figures in

religious history like Prahlada, Dhruva, Nachiketas, Kannappar, Jesus, Ramakrishna, Dayananda, etc., who showed signs of spiritual enlightenment even from boyhood. Such instances become perplexing in spite of the Freudian theory of infantile sexuality. In the generality of men it may be otherwise ; but all that can be argued from this is that the spiritual faculty in man, like other faculties, generally gains its full expression only with the maturity of the body.

2. No doubt various forms of sex taboos are enforced in societies by the influence of religious sanction. But this can be accounted for by the fact that religion and morality have always gone hand in hand. The connection between spiritual awakening and perfect continence is, however, more significant. It must be noted that the continence of the true aspirant and the repression of which psychologists are so well aware, are poles asunder in their method and results. As far as result is concerned, what happens in repression is a degeneration of mind, and in spiritual intuition a higher development of it. As for method, repression is accomplished through fear, unnatural application of force, dissimulation and ignorant evasion of the problem. The result of it is that sex tendencies and impressions remain submerged, and manifest as phantasies accompanied with mental disorders. In the case of a genuine spiritual aspirant practising continence, sex is fearlessly and intelligently faced and analysed, and thus, instead of being allowed to remain submerged as crude animal propensity, its energies are transformed into a higher power for the enrichment of man's psychic being. But even this is not to be identified or equ-

ated with spiritual illumination ; for what perfect continence does is only to provide the right subjective environment, a pure mind and body, in which alone spiritual intuition can gain full expression.

And as for what this spiritual faculty is, it will be nearer truth to recognise its distinctiveness instead of equating it with any of the other tendencies that psychologists generally classify as instincts. In fact there are writers on the psychology of religion who speak of a special religious instinct. Thus Rutgers Marshall writes in his 'Instinct and Reason' : "Religious activities, like the expression of all true instincts, seem often to be spontaneously developed in man. The masses of mankind do not have to be argued into the expression of religious feeling. Rather it is true that rationalistic and other barriers must be raised to prevent the expression of religious force that is found in various degrees." As to what the primary nature of that spiritual instinct is, Prof. Rudolph Otto, more than any one in modern times, has attempted to describe in his 'Idea of the Holy.' He defends its *a priori* character, and gives it the new name of the 'Numinous'. Starbuck, too, in his paper on the 'Instinctive Basis of Religion' maintains what he calls the cosmo-aesthetic and teleo-aesthetic senses to constitute the ultimate religious instinct in human nature.

Even those who do not agree to a special religious instinct must admit that human lives begin not only with biological instincts common to all members of the race but with certain other tendencies to action and feeling which are not shared by all, but are found only in particular individuals, just as in the case of genius for music,

etc. In his 'Psychology of Primitive Cultures,' Bartlett admits such tendencies and calls them 'individual difference tendencies.' The saints must have possessed such a tendency which differentiates them from others. This tendency may be described as the 'tendency to fix their attention beyond and above the reality of the senses, accompanied by a striving for profounder realities leading to a spirit of renunciation of immediate material enjoyment in order to obtain a felicity of a more lasting and universal character.' (De Sanctis' Religious Conversion'). Mac Doughall, too, admits as follows in the Symposium on 'Instinct and Reason' in the British Journal of Psychology : "There are many facts which compel us to go further in the recognition of innate mental structure, such facts as the special facilities shown by individuals in music, in mathematics, in language and other æsthetic and moral endowments. The question of the extent and nature of the innate endowments or innate mental structure remains one of the largest fields of work for psychology." The Hindus would attribute such special tendencies and aptitudes to tendencies acquired in previous births (Vide Gita VII:19 and VI:44). Even Leuba admits in his article in 'Religion in Transition' that there is one fact of enormous significance, a fact uncontestable and verifiable by every one : an urge works in every man, it is present already in the animal world, to create the perfect in every aspect of life.'

Thus, whether it is due to a special instinct common to all men, or to a tendency peculiar to special individuals, or to a general urge for perfection which is in evidence in all life but which becomes conscious in man, the

religious experience is something unique in itself and not attributable to any of the other instincts like the sex. It would be far safer to admit with Hegel that religion, philosophy and art are the final values towards which the world is striving.

3. As for the third point, namely, the possibility of interpreting spiritual experiences by the same laws applicable to the phantasies of mental defectives, it has to be remarked that from a psychologist who is committed to a naturalistic interpretation of all spiritual phenomena, nothing more can be expected. But to one who does not share his prejudice, the vast difference brought on the personality of a saint and of a mental defective by their respective experiences, is a positive proof for tracing it to different origins.

4. Lastly with regard to the use of erotic symbolisms by mystics in their writings and utterances, it will be very hasty and superficial to attribute their experiences to sex instinct from this fact alone. There is nothing to prove that they were prompted to use such language by any sexual craving. The true explanation of this can be had if we take the following facts into consideration : (a) Sex being the most powerful emotion known to the natural man, the language employed for its expression offers the most suitable medium to the mystics for conveying a glimpse at least of a transcendental experience that enraptures their soul. (b) As the highest Bhakti involves the union of the individual soul with the universal soul, the mystics find for it a handy illustration in the union of two persons in love. (c) Again many philosophical systems conceive God as the only Purusha or male, and look

upon all individual souls as females related as His wives. Thus if we find sex symbolisms in the writings of mystics; they are to be attributed to various influences, poetical, philological and philosophical, and not to any thing sexual in their spiritual experiences.

In addition to these facts, it must also be remembered that mystics employ symbolisms drawn from many aspects of life other than sex. Thus in the forms of Bhakti known as Dasya (servant's attitude), Sakhya (attitude of a friend), Vatsalya (parental attitude), and Santa (philosophical attitude), various imageries and expressions of love other than sexual are used. If the spiritual experiences attained in these cases are to be explained in terms of non-sexual instincts corresponding to these images, what we arrive at is not an explanation of facts but a mere confused understanding of them.

Far simpler would it be to accept the presence of a specific aspect in the human mind responding to stimuli that are distinctively spiritual. But it may be admitted that like all instincts, it too does not express itself in isolation in our life. Ordinarily, when it takes the form of a sentiment, it gets intertwined with other instincts, and thus in the life of the common man, the spiritual sense may be found mixed with many worldly tendencies. But for the highest spiritual realisation, the mind has to be thoroughly purged of its fleshy affections. For, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, a mind that is attached to 'women and gold,' i.e., sex and possessions, can help us only to understand worldly objects. It is only when the instincts have been purged of their natural taints by what Narada calls Nirodha, restraint

or renunciation, that the mind becomes capable of grasping the higher truths. In the case of a mind that has thus been refined and filled with the urge for the attainment of the Highest, it is absurd to talk of 'compartmental' instincts. All its energies have been unified into one form, and there is only one instinct in it, namely, the passion for God. It is this withdrawal of the mind from its instinctive

expressions, both in the objective and subjective fields—whether as flight towards its natural objects or as indulgence in wish-fulfilment through repressions and phantasies—that Narada indicates by the term 'Nirodha'.

Because this Nirodha is involved in Bhakti or spiritual Love and the illumination it gives, Bhakti cannot be described as of the nature of desire.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Jatadharan and Other Stories :** By K. S. Venkataramani. Published from *Svetaranya Ashrama, Mylapore, Madras*. Pp. 156. Price 1-5-0.

Mr. Venkataramani has an established reputation as an author of many interesting books in good and elegant English. The book under review is a collection of sketches rather than short stories, written at different intervals of time, revised and rewritten without changing appreciably their original structure or movement.

The book contains nine stories, though the first two can be treated as parts of the story relating to Jatadharan. The life sketched in these stories is the life of the middle class in South India. The descriptions of situations, the treatment of characters and the general construction and development of plots are interesting in their own way. The comments at appropriate places voice forth the author's own opinions on subjects of engaging interest. They are artfully insinuated rather than frankly expressed. The outstanding merit of the author consists in that he lifts up the commonplace to the realm of the artistic. The sketches in the book embrace a wide range of topics delineating the endless vicissitudes of social life. The characters in the stories appear like dramatic personae; at the mere touch of the author's pen they are made immortal. The author's inimitable gift at miniature painting is very much in evidence in this book.

The book abounds in sly humour of a light and instructive type with a vein of pathos running through them all. The author's style is suggestive and charming while in some places it is ornate and poetic. Its elegant grace, purity, simplicity and soothing cadence reminds one of Goldsmith and Tagore. The idyllic tenderness of sketches and the deep sincerity and generosity of sentiments are marked features which are bound to touch the heart of the readers and leave in them lasting impressions. What Johnson said of Goldsmith may well be said of Venkataramani that 'he did not touch anything that he did not adorn.'

**Ramayana-Balakanda :** By N. Ramaswamiah, Retired Subordinate Judge, Thanikachellam Chetty Road, Theagaroyanagar, Madras. To be had of the author. Pp. 184. Price Re. 1-8-0 or Sh. 2-8, free of postage.

This book contains translations of select verses from the first Canto of Valmiki's famous epic, the Ramayana, together with commentaries on them and a general Introduction. The purpose of the author in writing this book is not so much to convey the literary beauty and epic grandeur of the Ramayana to the English reader, but to interpret what he considers the esoteric and spiritual significance of individual verses as well as of the events of the great epic. His commentary connects most of

the verses translated with the practices inculcated by Laya Yoga, especially, with exercises in Pranayama. Although one may at times feel that the allegorical and esoteric meanings are somewhat far-fetched, no one can help admiring the author's keen insight and his very close acquaintance with the Yoga Sastra. His general Introduction gives a very readable account of the practice of Yoga. He has made some substantial contribution towards clarifying concepts like Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Bhuta Suddhi and so on.

**Sri Sukta, Lakshmi Sahasranama and Other Stotras : (Sanskrit).** Edited by A. Srinivasa Raghavan, M.A., *The Maharaja's College, Pudukottah.* Price Re. 1-3-0. Pp. xlix+192+75.

The Sri Sukta needs no introduction to the devotees of the Divine Mother, especially of the Vaishnavite persuasion. Though it does not find a place in the Vedas proper, it is included as a Khila and is one of the most popular hymns in the mouth of almost every orthodox Hindu devotee. Though there have been many commentaries on the hymn by well-known authors like Sayana and Prithvidharacharya, the commentary that has been most popular with the Vishistadvaitic School is the one from the pen of one of the most honoured among their Acharyas, viz., Sri Ranga Narayana Muni, variously known as Ranganatha and Nanjiyar, as the author points out in his Introduction. He was one of the foremost disciples of Parasara Bhatta, who is also the author of many other commentaries such as the one on the Tiruvaimozhi of Nammalwar known as

'9,000 padi.' The book under review contains not only the Sukta with English translation as well as the text of the Commentary of Ranganatha, but also the Bhumika by Sri Sri Saumya Narayanacharya dealing with the various aspects of Lakshmi worship. It also gives the texts of several well-known Lakshmi Stotras, such as the Chatuhshloki of Sri Yamunacharya, the Saranagati Gadya of Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Stava of Sri Vatsa Misra, the Gunaratnakosa of Parasara Bhatta, Sri Stuti of Vedanta Desika, with their translations, as well as the Lakshmi Sahasranama and Ashottarasatam with Namavalis useful for Puja and Japam, as well as an alphabetical index of names. The book is well planned and neatly executed and is a veritable *vade mecum* on all questions relating to the worship of the Mother, especially according to the Visishtadvaitic School. The Commentary of Ranganatha is a veritable mine of information on the doctrines and practices of Lakshmi worship and has laid under contribution all the available literature on the subject, and has been the basis of many later commentaries on the Sukta. It is very interesting to note how the commentator identifies the male and female aspects of Divinity, and points out the identity of Lakshmi Herself with the many female Deities to whom Vedic prayers are addressed, such as Sraddha, Medha, etc. This lends colour to the view that Sri or Lakshmi of devotional literature represents the inner urge of spirituality leading everyone on to final perfection, and forms only a dynamic aspect of the One True Immanent God in the heart of everybody.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna's Temple at Belur

Enormous crowds of men and women congregated at Belur Math on Friday the 14th of January, and participated in the all-day celebrations in connection with the dedication of the new temple to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a marble statue of whom was installed in it.

The magnificent edifice, said to be unique of its kind in Bengal, represents the fulfilment of one of the cherished dreams of the life of the greatest and noblest among Ramakrishna's disciples, Swami Vivekananda. 233 ft. in length, 109 ft. in breadth and 112 ft. in height, the total cost of its construction, which is likely to be



completed by March next, is estimated at over eight lakhs of rupees, including the marble statue, 'Vedi' etc.

Miss Helen Rubel and Mrs. Anna Worcester, the two American devotees, who contributed nearly seven lakhs of rupees for the construction of the temple, were also present at Belur Math on Friday. Barefooted, they joined in the celebrations, receiving spontaneous greetings from the crowds.

More than 150 monks have arrived at the Math from different centres of the Mission in different parts of India. It is estimated that more than 50,000 people took part in the celebrations, and about 10,000 received 'prasad' on Friday.

The opening ceremony of this new temple marked an important chapter in the history of Belur Math and Ramakrishna Mission and was regarded by the monks as one of the happiest occasions in their lives.

It was yet dark when the earliest batch of people, numbering about two hundred, flocked to Belur Math to take part in the morning function which commenced at half past six with the opening ceremony performed by Swami Vijnanananda, the present President of the Ramakrishna Mission. By the time the sun appeared in the horizon, tearing off the veils of mist, and the waters of the Ganges glittered and danced in sunshine large crowds congregated in the vast area of the Math, resounding with the chanting of 'Mantram' and shouts of 'Guru Maharajki Jai'.

The sacred remains of Sri Ramakrishna and his relics were carried in an impressive procession from the old buildings to the new temple where they were installed by the President. He also consecrated the marble statue of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna).

The 'Puja' with all Vedic rituals started at 8 in the morning and continued up to 5 in the evening. There were 'Kirtan' songs throughout the day. Eight Mahratta Brahmin Pandits with four Bengali Pandits from Benares performed 'Vedic Hom'.

There were fire-works and illumination at night. The St. John Ambulance volunteers and the Calcutta Fire Brigade attended to about thirty-five cases of minor accident.

The design of the temple follows scrupulously the conception of Swami Vivekananda who was anxious to find a suitable and permanent "Home" for the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna. And for this, true to the precepts of his great Master, Swami Vivekananda conceived the idea of a temple which would embody the distinctive features of the various religious faiths of the world as he cherished the hope that worshippers belonging to different faiths would congregate here without their convictions being disturbed in any way.

As desired by Swami Vivekananda, with whom the idea of this temple originated, the architecture of the temple represents a synthesis of different forms and styles.

The altar on which the main statue of Sri Ramakrishna has been installed, as also the canopy above it, have been designed by S. Nanda Lal Bose and his students.

#### Holy Mother's Birthday

The Eighty-fifth birthday of the Holy Mother was celebrated in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on the 24th of December. The functions of the day included special worship, Homa and distribution of consecrated food. The public celebration came off on the 24th Saturday, when a meeting, attended by a very large number of ladies was held. Lady Raman was voted to the chair. Impressive addresses were delivered in Tamil and English by Sister Subbulakshmi Ammal, Sm. Visalakshi Ammal, Sm. Ambujammal and Sm. Ratnamayi Devi, bringing out the unique life and inspiring teachings of the Holy Mother and their special significance to the women of Modern India. Two other well attended meetings were also organised by the ladies in Mambalam and George Town.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Temple, Colombo

The religious ceremony in connection with the opening of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Temple and Prayer Hall of Colombo was performed on the 24th December 1937 by Swami Saswatananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras. The function consisted of special Pooja, Homa and the chanting of scriptures. It was attended by a large

gathering consisting of followers of different faiths.

The public function in connection with the opening ceremony took place on the 4th of January. After declaring the Temple open, Swami Saswatananda addressed a large gathering of the various communities and religionists of the Island, which had assembled there on the occasion.

In the course of his speech the Swami said that religions could be studied from three standpoints—the individual, the eclectic and the synthetic. According to the first standpoint, a person believed that his was the only true religion on earth. His outlook on other religions was necessarily narrow and crude. The person who was inclined to the eclectic view believed that all the religions had elements of truth. He tried to piece all these fragments of truths together to make a total whole. In trying to do so, he attempted to evolve a scripture of his own which had no authority behind it. He found it difficult to choose a path of Sadhana for his individual practice. The eclectic view was supplanted by the synthetic view. In this latter view, a person believed in the truth of his own religion and acknowledged the truth of other religions. He recognised that diversity is a law of nature, and that various religions, as also sects within a religion, were bound to exist. He found unity in variety. The synthetic combined the vigour and intensity of the faith of the individualist with the breadth and generosity of the eclectic.

All religions, the Swami continued, insisted that a man's life should be founded on morals. They aimed at truth, charity, purity and simplicity of life. Truth is one, though people called it by various names. All religions were established for the benefit of mankind and not for their mutual destruction. All religions consider the realisation of God or Perfection as the culmination of man's endeavours. All religions preach that, God being impartial, all men are equal in His eyes. Many more points of similarity could be found out.

He next traced the early history of the Ramakrishna Mission, and said that what the world needed at the present hour was a happy and peaceful fellowship of all the great religions.

Continuing, he said: "Sri Ramakrishna boldly proclaimed, 'As many faiths, so many paths.' He taught that it is the duty of every man to stick to his own faith and also have positive love for every other faith. At a time when we find that the League of Nations could not bring about peace in the political world, there is only one hope still left for us to achieve that goal. That is by a League of Faiths. We can never attain world peace by deprecating the religions of our neighbours. Each faith has its own place in the world. Each is equally great in its own place. The spirit of the times demand such catholicity of views. God is for all and is nobody's monopoly. When we study these various religions sympathetically, our outlook broadens. Narrowness of vision and understanding is vicious. A fellowship of faiths will ultimately lead to world brotherhood."

He then proceeded to state that the temple had been erected not for the glorification of one particular religion, but for preaching the Eternal Religion which lies embedded in the hearts of people wherever they might be.

In conclusion he appealed to those present to visit the shrine regularly and imbibe the spirit of universal prayer. With a vote of thanks by Swami Asangananda, the function came to a close.

The Temple, which is called the Ramakrishna Centenary Temple, has been built by Messrs. Premjee Devjee, M. K. Kapadia and M. J. Patel. The prayer hall has been built by Dr. G. Wignarajah.

#### Mayavati Charitable Dispensary

This dispensary, run by the Advaita Ashrama of Mayavati, is situated in the heart of the Himalayas—a locality where people have no other means of receiving medical help for miles round. Hence people from a distance of even 30 or 40 miles go there for treatment. The dispensary is in the charge of a monastic member who is qualified for the task.

During the current year a new building has been constructed to house the dispensary, which is at present provided with 12 beds and an operation room. The Indoor section of the hospital treated 130 cases, of which 115 were discharged cured, 6 left treatment, 7 relieved and 2 died. The Out-

door section gave relief to 9060 patients, of which 5,882 were new and 3,078 repeated cases.

The present needs of the institution are:

(1) Endowments for five beds, the cost of maintaining each being Rs. 1,500 (2) contribution for building fund and, (3) strengthening of the general fund.

**Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home,  
Madras. 33rd Annual Report**

The Home stands for the Gurukul ideal, according to which students coming from all ranks of society are to live together as brothers during their scholastic career, and are expected to perform some service as an integral part of their education. Brahmacharya and service are therefore the main ideals of the institution.

The policy of the Home in selecting students is to admit the poorest among the best. At the end of the year 1937 there were 176 inmates, of which 107 were in the Residential High School, 48 in Industrial School, 19 in Arts Colleges, 1 in School of Medicine, and 1 in Medical College. About half the number of students were in receipt of scholarship from various sources.

During the year, the following buildings were put up for improving the accommodation: (1) An additional class room for the Industrial School. (2) An outhouse close to the bathing place, and (3) a block of two quarters for the residential staff.

The training given to the boys in the Home has several unique features. There are no servants in the Home except two

cooks, and the major part of the household work like serving food, purchase of provisions, care of property, cleaning the buildings, white-washing, painting, and annual repairs are in the hands of boys themselves. The boys are divided into 9 convenient groups, and each group is under the guidance of one master. All the boys take part in garden work for one period in the day and thus gain valuable practical training in horticulture. Attention is paid to physical training by means of regular drill in the mornings and games in the evenings. They take part in all the important Hindu festivals, receive lessons in religion and morals, especially a course of sound instruction in the Gita, and learn music in the classes organised thrice a week for the benefit of those who have taste in that direction.

Attached to it, the Home has a Residential High School and an Industrial School. The Industrial School provides a course of five years' sound training in the theoretical and practical aspects of automobile engineering, and coaches students for the Government L.A.E. Diploma.

Besides these institutions the management of the Home also conducts a High School, having sections for boys and girls, in Thyagarayanagar. It has at present a strength of 1608, although it has been in existence only for the past five years. The School has a Hostel which accommodates at present 32 pupils. While the line of training here is also more or less as in the Home, this institution is meant for those who can afford to pay, while the Home is meant mainly for those who cannot do so.





Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

निन्दस्तु च समा नित्यं प्रशंसस्तु च देवल । निद्वन्ति च ये तेषां समयं सुकृतं च यत् ॥  
उक्ताश्च न विवक्ष्यन्ति वक्तारमहि ते हितम् । प्रतिहन्तुं न चेद्वन्ति हन्तारं वै मनीषिणः ॥  
नाप्राप्तमनुशोचन्ति प्राप्तकालानि कुर्वते । न चातीतानि शोचन्ति न चैतान् प्रतिजानते ॥  
सम्प्राप्तानां च पूज्यानां कामादर्थेषु देवल । ययोपपत्तिं कुर्वन्ति शक्तिमन्तो दृढव्रताः ॥  
पक्वविद्या महाप्राज्ञाः जितक्रोधाः जितेन्द्रियाः । मनसा कर्मणा वाचा नापराध्यन्ति कस्यचित् ॥  
अनीर्षवो न चान्योन्यं विहिंसन्ति कदाचन । न जातूपतप्यन्ते धीराः परसमृद्धिभिः ॥  
निन्दाप्रशंसे चात्यर्थं न वदन्ति परस्य च । न च निन्दाप्रशंसाभ्यां विक्रियन्ते कदाचन ॥  
सर्वतश्च प्रशान्ताये सर्वभूतहि ते रताः । य एवं कुर्वते मर्यां सुखं जीवन्ति सर्वदा ॥

They always live in happiness, O Devala, who ever cultivate the attitude of sameness in praise and blame ; who conceal their noble resolutions and good acts ; who do not waste words when they are unnecessarily interrogated ; who speak wholesome words to even their opponents ; who do not strike back even when they are struck ; who do not repent of, and ponder over, the unattained ; who are solely taken up with the duties that lie at hand ; who are ready to extend cordial hospitality to all worthy persons as occasions arise ; who are endowed with courage and firmness to carry out their intentions ; who possess mature knowledge and vast intelligence ; whose thoughts, words and deeds bear no evil fruit to any ; who are free from anger and are possessed of subdued senses ; who are strangers to envy and never do harm to others ; who feel no uneasiness about the rise of others ; who never indulge in adulation or deprecation of others ; who are never affected by praise and derision ; who are perfectly calm in every respect ; and who find their delight in doing good to others.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 236 :9—15 & 18,

## THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE INCARNATION

[The Divine is present in every being ; yet many religions have conceived of His manifestation in the outside world in a special sense, as a Divine personality. Such special manifestations are called Divine Incarnations. In the following paragraphs we give a short exposition of this theory as developed in Christianity and Hinduism.]

### I

**I**N our last number we dealt with the theory of the Superman in Islam and Buddhism. We shall now consider the views on this question maintained by the two other great world-religions—Christianity and Hinduism.

Among the great religions of the world, the doctrine of the Superman or, rather, of Incarnation is most important for Christianity. For the whole structure of Christianity, nay, its very claim to be accepted by mankind, rests on its theory of Incarnation. Christianity may have many beautiful moral teachings, many devotional and philosophical ideas in common with other religions ; but we forget the core of its teaching if we overlook the fact that to proclaim unto mankind the glory of the only Incarnation, the Word manifested in flesh, is the central part of its message.

The special point of philosophical interest in Christianity lies in the combination it effects of the Greek idea of Logos with the Jewish notion of Messiah, through the personality of Jesus Christ who is claimed as a historical personage inaugurating a new era in the life of mankind. The idea of the Logos makes its first appearance in the system of Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher. Heraclitus did not accept a transcendent God, but he admitted a divine soul of the world, whose life is manifested in the end-

less cycle of birth and death, of becoming, change, decay and renewal. This is the Logos, the Immanent Reason of the world, the one homogeneous principle throughout it. From this conception, Anaxagoras raised the Logos to the position of an intermediate principle between God and the universe. He spoke of it as the Divine Intelligence. A further development of it we find in the philosophy of the Stoics. Besides speaking of it as divine wisdom, they conceived it also as the divine activity, 'the seminal reason' of the universe. In Philo, who was a Jew nurtured in Greek thought, the conception becomes more clear and definite. The Logos is definitely a cosmic principle occupying an intermediate position between God and the world. It is the principle of divine revelation. The Logos, according to him, has two relations—in relation to God it is the first born Son of God ; in relation to man it is the archetypal Man in whose image all other men are created. Again it is the Idea of ideas, the whole mind of God going out of itself in creation.

For all these pre-Christian thinkers, the Logos was only a cosmic principle. It was only in relation to the world of creation that they conceived it. They did not think of it as non-temporal, and it was beyond their remotest idea to associate it with the Messianic hopes of any people and find its historical embodiment in flesh and

blood in any human personality. It was reserved for Christianity preached by the writer of the fourth Gospel and by St. Paul to extend the significance of the Logos doctrine in these respects. The Pauline and Johannan Logos is more clearly defined as a second Person in Godhead, distinct, though eternally inseparable, from Him. The interest in the Logos as a creative principle disappears for the Gospels. To the Christian the Logos is not so much the revelation of God's nature as of his *character*—the Divine as self-sacrificing love. And what is more the Gospel adapts the revolutionary step of identifying the Logos with the Incarnation.

According to the Fourth Gospel the Logos was before the world, and before time began, in closest union with God, with a sort of transcendental subordination. He is thus supra-temporal and not simply the spirit of the world. He is the agent and the quickening spirit in creation, and the life of all that lives and the light of all that shines. The light had brooded over all history, enlightening every man, but unrecognised by many. At last came the time when 'the Logos became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only-born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth'.

This only revelation of the Logos in flesh and blood is Jesus Christ. He is both human and divine, and it is through him we understand the character of God and have access to Him. Man gains salvation only through faith in the Incarnation, the only begotten Son of God. Humanity has inherited the Original Sin of its first ancestors. That sin, being an act against God Himself, can be wiped off only by a sacrifice of in-

finite potency and it was to effect the redemption of humanity by such a sacrifice that God sent his only begotten son or Logos or Word—which are all synonymous terms—to live among men and suffer on the Cross. That was why Jesus Christ, though the Son of God and the most perfect being that ever tread the earth, died on the Cross even though he was himself sinless. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ would, by virtue of his atoning sacrifice, be redeemed from sin, and gain Heaven. Thus the truth of the Incarnation and the salvation of man are vitally inter-related.

Christianity is very emphatic in maintaining that the Incarnation or the manifestation of the Logos in flesh and blood took place only once in the whole of history, and that this is a unique incident which will never be repeated. Why Christianity is so adamant in maintaining the impossibility of more incarnations than one will appear mysterious until we realise the close relation of Christianity to the Mystery Religions of the Greco-Roman world, against which it had to struggle for supremacy in its early days. Each of these Mystery Religions had its own story of an incarnate God who sacrificed himself for the sake of the believers. The people of the Greco-Roman world, among whom Christianity had to find its first haven after it left its cradle in Judea, were so steeped in the doctrines and rituals of the Mystery Religions that in order to gain general acceptance Christianity was forced to fall in line with them in these respects. Hence in contending against these rival cults it was necessary for Christianity to insist uncompromisingly that its saviour God was the only true Incarnation and that all others advocated by the differ-

ent cults were spurious. This idea of the uniqueness of Christ and of his being the only Incarnation of the Divinity became very natural to Christianity in course of time, and as a result even reputed Christian thinkers feel a sentimental shock when they find a liberal-hearted Hindu comparing Jesus Christ with any of their Incarnations. Christians generally defend this revulsion of theirs against such comparisons, to the fact of Christ having inaugurated a new chapter in human history and so forth, but its real explanation lies in the connection of Christianity with the Mystery Religions in its early days. But the Christian saviour received a higher significance by his early identification with the Logos of the Greek thinkers, and as a result, when handled by real thinkers and genuine mystics, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation becomes a high spiritual ideal with an insistence on Divine immanence, instead of being an unphilosophical belief in an extra-cosmic God making his appearance among men once in the history of mankind. Hence in higher Christian thought we hear of Christ as a cosmic principle, of the generation of the Son by the Father as a continuous process and not a single act in a remote past, and also of Christ being 'born in us' or 'begotten in us'. In fact the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation becomes understandable only when we view it in the light of the three influences that have gone into its make-up—the Messianic hope of the Jews, the dying incarnate God of the Mystery Religions, and the Logos philosophy of the Greeks.

## II

We now pass to the doctrine of Divine Incarnation as understood in

Hinduism. Although the idea of Incarnation has played a very important part in Hinduism, it is not a basic doctrine in it as it is in Christianity. Hence to understand the significance of this doctrine in Hinduism, it has to be considered in relation to the general theory of human perfection inculcated by it.

It is generally agreed by all scholars that in the Vedic literature we do not come across the idea of Divine Incarnation in the sense of God living in flesh and blood among human beings. We have therein the conception of Rishis or men of exceptional spiritual powers and insight. The Upanishads recognise the Divinity of every being, and according to those scriptures it is possible for one, by a life of righteousness and contemplation, to manifest that Divinity even in the embodied state. In the ordinary man the Divine is obscured by ignorance, but Knowledge removes this obscuration and helps the divine essence of the soul to shine in its glory. In the terminology of later Vedānta such a person is a Jivannukta, one who is free even in the embodied state. He is a true Superman, because though he is human in form he is free from all the limitations of men who are in bondage. He has realised his distinctness from the body and mind, and recognised the oneness of his essence with Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, which forms the substratum of the universe. He is yet in the embodied state because the Karma that has brought his present body into existence is not yet exhausted. With the death of the present body, he has no further embodiment, because there is no more 'he' to be reborn. For his essence has recognised its identity

with the Universal Spirit which is free from all corruption.

Besides the Jivanmuktas, the Vedānta speaks of another type of Supermen known as Adhikarikapurushas or persons endowed with special commission. In the conception of the Jivanmukta it has been pointed out how it is the residue of Karma that is responsible for the continuance of his body for some length of time even after enlightenment. There are some enlightened souls in whom a strong desire to do good to the world remains even after enlightenment. In the case of such souls the strength of this desire also forms a part of the residual Karma, and hence by virtue of this desire they gain one or more embodiments until that desire is worked out. Persons who receive embodiment in this way are born perfect, and all their activities, including the spiritual practices they may undergo, are performed in the interest of mankind at large. Such souls who are born perfect are also known as Nitya-siddhas and Isvarakotis.

### III

Next we pass on from these ideas of Supermen to the doctrine of Divine Incarnation proper. For a thoroughgoing Vedantist, who thinks only in terms of the Impersonal Absolute, the doctrine of special Incarnation of the Divinity is of little significance. He would accept the Divinity of all, the embodied soul being nothing but a misreading of the Absolute. With his mind always turned towards the Absolute, he has nothing to do with special manifestations and similar doctrines that emphasise distinctions and differences. So it is only in the theistic aspect of Vedānta, as distinguished from its Absolutist aspect, that the

doctrine of special Divine Incarnation comes to be of significance. That is why we find no mention of such special manifestation in the Upanishads which deal mainly with the Absolutist aspect of Vedānta. The doctrine of Divine Incarnation is a special development in Puranic literature wherein the theistic implications of Vedānta are emphasised.

As the Puranas are mythological literature chiefly intended for popular consumption, the doctrine is not systematically treated in them. According to these mythical representations, when great corruption prevails in the world, the gods and Brahma, the demiurge, go to the Heaven of the Supreme Deity, and implore Him to be born in the world in order to destroy the wicked and to restore order and righteousness. In response to such requests the Deity takes embodiment periodically sometimes in human and sometimes in sub-human forms. These Puranas sometimes specify their number as ten, sometimes as twenty-four and sometimes as innumerable. But popular imagination in later times has over-stepped even the widest concession of the Puranas. It has become the general habit among many people now-a-days to call their Guru a Divine Incarnation. This would not in itself be objectionable, if the disciple means that he finds the highest representation of Divinity, as far as he is concerned, in his spiritual teacher. But unfortunately disciples are not satisfied without declaring the Incarnationhood of their Gurus from house tops, and many Gurus too are not loath to prompt their disciples to do so either directly or indirectly. As a result we find such a plethora of Divine Incarnations in modern India



that the very term has practically lost all significance.

It is no doubt true that unlike the Christian scripture, the sacred books of Hindus speak of a multiplicity of Divine Incarnations. But that dignified title should not be applied to every spiritual teacher but reserved only for spiritual leaders of the exceptional type. Roughly speaking the characteristics of Divine Incarnations are as follows :

(1) An ordinary embodied being, however eminent he might be spiritually, is born as a result of his past Karma, or is in other words, he is Mayadhina (subject to Maya). A Divine Incarnation on the other hand is not thus born with the encumbrance of the past, as a slave of Karma, to reap the fruits of his actions. He is born free, and the limitations under which he appears are assumed of his own free will. In other words he is not a slave of Maya, but its master (Mayadhisa). For this reason he is free from the bondages of the world from the very start of his life. Concupiscence and thirst for selfish gain, the two cords with which Maya binds creatures to the world, have no power over them. The glimmerings of their divinity manifest now and then through their humanity even from their very childhood, and as their life becomes more and more mature, this characteristic of a spiritual teacher becomes the dominant mood in them. Their minds have always access to two regions of existence, as it were. As a person sitting on the threshold of a room can at will know of things within the room as well as without, their minds are, as it were, poised on the dividing line between the relative and the Absolute spheres of existence, and they can therefore at will put

themselves in these two states of consciousness. In the case of the ordinary liberated souls, once their consciousness becomes unconditioned, they do not come to the relative plane. Because of the simultaneous knowledge of the Absolute and the relative, the Divine Incarnation is able to enter into the moods of people at all levels of spiritual development and couch his teachings according to their varying needs. All these unique features of personality spring from the fact that even in the embodied state the Divine Incarnation is the master of Maya, never its slave.

(2) The purpose of the life of an ordinary embodied being is to work out his own salvation. But a Divine Incarnation is born in this world not for any individual purpose. He comes exclusively on a mission of social, nay, of cosmic importance. According to the Bhagavad Gita, whenever there is great decline of righteousness and the triumph of unrighteousness, the Incarnation comes in order to establish righteousness and destroy unrighteousness.

(3) This establishment of righteousness has got its physical and spiritual counterparts. Without a certain amount of physical violence and struggle the forces of evil cannot be suppressed. So the times when the Incarnation appears will be characterised by great national struggles in which the Incarnation may or may not take a direct part. But in this struggle the emissaries of evil perish, and from the sufferings resulting from it men at large learn the folly of a purely materialistic ideal of life. As the world thus gets prepared for it, the spiritual ideal set up by the Incarnation becomes more and more patent to mankind, and it slowly dissi-

pates the clouds of scepticism from the minds of people. Righteousness is truly established only when men's faith in the spiritual ideal is restored ; for the absence of true faith in it is at the root of all corruption. The Incarnation is the centre from which this true faith radiates and sanctifies the world.

(4) Again the spiritual energy of the Incarnation is incomparably greater than that of the ordinary liberated man, both in intensity and extensiveness. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, if an ordinary Jivanmukta is like a log of wood capable of taking himself and two or three persons safely across the mighty river of life, the Incarnations are like steamers carrying hundreds of people to their destination. By an effort of their will they are capable of removing the beginningless ignorance in which beings are enshrouded, and of rousing their latent spiritual possibilities. As Swami Vivekananda put it, they are *Kapala-mochanas*,—beings who can free men from 'what is written on their head'. But the spiritual power they generate is not confined to their own lifetime. Every Incarnation leaves behind him a new revelation of Divine attributes in the shape of his own life and personality, promulgates a new law by means of his teachings, and propagates a new ideal of character through the line of his disciples. In other words, to borrow an expression of the Buddhists, 'The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha' form the heritage which every Incarnation leaves behind. Thus the Incarnation, unlike the ordinary spiritual man, is alive not only for his contemporaries, but for all posterity ; for to contemplate on his divine life and activities itself becomes a means of spiritual

awakening. In the words of the Gita: "He who knows aright My divine birth and works will never be born again when he leaves his body, but will come to me, O Arjuna."

#### IV

In conclusion we may say a word as to how the doctrine of Divine Incarnation can be related to Vedanta philosophy. The Christian idea of the Incarnation as the manifestation in flesh and blood of the Logos, the one cosmic principle that is distinct from the Supreme Divinity without being different from Him, is quite acceptable to Vedanta, with the qualification that such manifestation is not one only but many. In fact the Logos idea is not much different from the Hindu idea of Divine Sakti. The only difference is that in the conception of Sakti both the redemptive and creative aspects of Divinity are equally emphasised, while in the idea of the Logos the former has come to overshadow the latter in the hands of Christian thinkers. The doctrine that the same Divine Principle appears as different Incarnations is beautifully put by Sri Ramakrishna thus : "The Avatara is always one and the same. Having plunged into the ocean of life, the one God rises up at one point and is known as Krishna, and when after another plunge He rises at another point, He is known as Christ."

Again according to the Vedanta the whole universe is a limitation or expression of the Deity. If such a manifestation of the Divinity can be conceived, what special objection can there be to the idea of His limiting Himself as a personality and expressing in himself the highest values of life in their maximum degree. It is also to be remembered that as the indwell-

ing spirit the Divinity is incarnate within all beings. The Divine Incarnation is nothing but an objective and cosmic counterpart of this inner Incarnation ; for, in the words of the great Sanskrit poet Magha : " Who can know the glory of Thine, the primeval Being than whom there is none greater ? For even though born as man, Thou dost surpass all varie-

ties of superhuman beings in Thy power to cut asunder the worldly bondage of creatures . . . . . Unless Thou hadst come down to this earth for the destruction of evil by Thy prowess, how could persons like me have a sight of Thee, who art not comprehended even by the sages of deep meditative power."

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*By A Devotee*

[Swami Shivananda, otherwise known as Mahapurushji Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In his life time he had travelled extensively all over India and was responsible for quickening of the spiritual life of innumerable men. These conversations are pages from the diaries of Sannyasin and householder devotees of his, and contain many of the precious instructions imparted by him to spiritual aspirants.]

**IT WAS** the month of October, 1923. The Non-Co-operation Movement was in full swing all through the country. Batches after batches of people were going to jail. There was a great awakening throughout India at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Thousands of men and women had chosen the political emancipation of the motherland as the best of all vows, and were ready to dedicate their lives at the altar of Mother India.

It was Monday evening. Just then the evening service was over in the Shrine. There was perfect calmness all around, and from a distance it appeared as if the Math was quite uninhabited. The Sadhus and Brahmancharins were all engaged in their devotional practices.

Mahapurush Maharaj was seated on his bed in his room, absorbed in meditation. In the faint light, his

calm face looked more tranquil and luminous. For long he was in that mood, and then he broke the silence by singing Shrivamahimna Stotram in a low tune. His mind, it seemed, was still immersed in an ocean of bliss. At this time, a devotee from Calcutta, slowly coming down from the Shrine, prostrated before Mahapurushji with great devotion and took his seat on the floor. The devotee was well-known to the Math, being closely associated with its work. After a while, Mahapurushji himself enquired affectionately, " Who is there ? Is it K— ? When did you come ? " The devotee, taking the dust of his feet with great reverence, said : " Yes, Maharaj, I came just at the time of the evening service."

Mahapurushji : Had you been in the shrine so long ?

Devotee : Yes, Maharaj.

Mahapurushji : Well, tell me why you look so sad and dejected ? I suppose all are well at home ?

Devotee : By your blessings, all are doing well. But, Maharaj, for the last few days, one thing is agitating my mind very much. Hence this great restlessness. I have come to the Math to-day only to tell you of that. If you permit me, I shall unburden my mind to you.

Mahapurushji : That's all right. Why don't you do so ?

Devotee (with great emotion) : Maharaj, the whole country now has become inspired by the Non-Co-operation Movement of Mahatmaji. Hundreds of men and women are suffering in jail. So many men are giving up their very lives. Mahatmaji too has thrown himself into the fray. How is it that the Ramakrishna Mission is keeping quiet, without participating in this All-India movement. Have you nothing to do on this occasion ? The whole country is wondering as to what the Ramakrishna Mission is going to do. Have they no duty in this struggle for the freedom of the country ?

And at the end he complainingly added, "Does not your heart weep a little for the country ? Have you no power to do even something ?"

The calm face of Mahapurushji became more grave. After a little silence he said slowly : "Well, K—, the activities of the Incarnation of the age are beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. How will our countrymen in general or yourself understand the purpose behind God's activities. When God assumes human form, He does not come for a particular country or for a particular nation. He comes for the good of the whole world. This time He has

manifested in His great Sattvic aspect. In Sri Ramakrishna you find this fullest embodiment of Sattva Guna. Though he had all the six divine attributes within himself, he lived in the human body depending on purest Sattvic ideas. Don't you see how he spent his whole life in a temple on the banks of the Ganges ? How will you understand the inner meaning of all these events ? He brought along with himself such a receptacle of great power as Swamiji, to be his associate in preaching those Sattvic spiritual ideas. If Swamiji desired, could he not have created a political revolution in the country ? Who is a greater patriot than he ? How many men's hearts bled like his for the poor and the miserable ? But he did not do that. If that would do ultimate good to India, he would have certainly done that. Leave aside the case of Swamiji. By the grace of the Lord, such power is lodged even in us that, if we so desire, we too can create a violent agitation in the country. But the Master won't allow us to do that. He has brought us as the associates of his work and is directing us with his own hand ; he is making us do real good to the country and the world. And we too are doing that. We have no other desire except the good of the world. I cannot make you understand the intensity of pain that we feel at the miseries of the world. That is known only to the Lord who abides in our hearts. After the passing away of the Master, his whole power and the responsibility of his mission devolved upon Swamiji. Touring round the world from end to end and minutely seeing things for himself, Swamiji established this Math and Mission at the direction of the Master for carrying on activities cal-

culated to do good to the world, more especially to India, and one by one engaged us all in these activities. Could we not have spent our lives in austerities, in mountains and forests? We had been practically doing that. All of us had gone out in different directions according to our choice, for spiritual practices. But slowly Swamiji called us all back and engaged us in these activities—in the work of serving Jivas as the veritable manifestations of the Lord. And even in this old age we are doing that."

Devotee : Then, Maharaj, is it your opinion that Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders of the country are not doing the right thing for the service of the country? Their unique sacrifice, forbearance and service to the country cannot be ignored. What an amount of torture and oppression they are undergoing for the sake of the country!

Mahapurushji : I do not deny it. Their sacrifice, forbearance and service to the country are really very praiseworthy. Their lives also are indeed great and ideal. Moreover, they are doing a lot of work for the country. But then the method of our work is of a different nature. What they understand well, what they consider good for the country, they are sincerely doing that. Do you know our impression? They are undertaking all these activities, being actuated by one or other of the ideals of the Master and Swamiji. And there is not the least doubt that Mahatma Gandhi is really a very powerful man. It is also true that a special manifestation of the Divine Mother—the Primeval Energy—has taken shape through him. In the Gita, addressing Arjuna, Sri Bhagavan says, "Whatever being there is great, prosperous

or powerful, know that to be born of a part of My splendour." One has to recognise a special expression of Divinity wherever one notices great manifestation of power or capacity to win the esteem and regard of vast numbers of people. That power of the Mother of the Universe, which the Master invoked for the good of the world, is expressing itself differently through different channels. In many places, Swamiji has indicated how the real good of India will be achieved. All that he said for the good of the country some twenty-five or thirty years back, such as the giving up of the custom of untouchability, the uplift of the depressed classes, education of the masses, etc.,—those very ideas are being preached now by Mahatma Gandhi. It is certain that real good will be done to the country in this way. We do not, however, make much propaganda through papers. We do things practically, but not through political activities. Mahatmaji, on the other hand, is doing those very things through politics. As far as we are concerned, while we desire the good of India, we want the good of other countries also. As we are doing work for the good of India in this country, we are doing work in other countries as well for the good of those countries. But our method of work is different according to the varying needs of diverse countries, times and people concerned. Every self-sacrificing son of this Math and Mission, which Swamiji has founded, is doing work for his own salvation as also for the good of the world, according to the ideal and direction of Swamiji and the Master.

Devotee : But, Maharaj, if the Ramakrishna Math and Mission were to co-operate with this political move-

ment, the awakening brought about by Mahatmaji, and the progress of the country through it, would have been much more accelerated. This is not only my opinion but of many great and thoughtful men too. Why don't you work together with Mahatmaji?

Mahapurushji : Well, I have already told you that we are working according to our own ideal. And this ideal has been left to us by that far-seeing Rishi, Swamiji himself. The future picture, not only of India but of the whole world for a thousand years, manifested itself before his divine vision, and visualising all that clearly and with a full understanding of facts, he had chalked out for us a particular line of action. In his case it was not like throwing stones in the dark. He could see clearly the visions of the distant future. The Divine Power that manifested itself as Sri Ramakrishna in this age, the like had never appeared for the last hundreds of years. This spiritual current will

flow on unobstructed for a pretty long time in the whole world. This is just the beginning only. This spiritual sun, which has arisen in the firmament of India, will illumine the entire world by its pure rays. It is because of this that Swamiji said, "This time the centre is India." That spiritual power will radiate all round, making India its centre. Who can check the progress of this spiritual power ? The awakening of India is as sure as anything. The whole world will wonder at the progress of India in education, in consecrated service, power, fitness, learning and intellectual attainments. The future of India will be so glorious that her past glories will look pale before it. Then you will understand why the Master and Swamiji came and what they have done for India. How will people, with their poor intellect, understand their activities ? Don't you see how they have roused the national Kundalini of India ?

## SYMBOLISM : THE COMMON ORIGIN OF RELIGIONS

*By Adolphe Ferriere*

[Dr. Ferriere is the founder, and at present the soul, of the New Education Fellowship. Besides being the editor of *L'Ére Nouvelle*, the organ of the New Education Fellowship on the Continent, he is the author of a number of volumes on New Education, which have been translated into several European languages. From the domain of Sociology and education, in which he gained fame in his early years, he is now being recognised more and more as a writer on philosophical and spiritual subjects, especially after his work *Le Progrès Spirituel*. In the following article Dr. Ferrier maintains that symbols are accidental to religions, their essence being the same for all times and climes. We are indebted to Mr. P. Seshadri Aiyar, B.A., M.L., for translating it from French.]

**I**N each epoch man makes a rediscovery of truths announced to the world long, long ago by the sages of antiquity. So much is it true that the petty reason of man does not

suffice to discover the hidden meaning of the realities which his eyes witness every day, unless a long evolution—individual or hereditary—and profound reflections help him to see the

invisible and discover the hidden forces which govern the world and living beings.

And that is why sages have appeared at all epochs. And they have spoken. But people listened not to them. They came too soon. Humanity, lost in 'involution', in the petty cares of the world and in the defence of material benefits and egoistic interests, was not ripe for understanding the prophets of spiritual evolution. Attachment and detachment are opposed to each other just as obscure ancestral impulses and aspirations to spiritual beauty, or as the monarchic, military or ecclesiastic order to the order understood and wished for by men of discernment.

The history of humanity like the history of each man from his cradle to the grave presents these contrasts : a lost paradise and aspiration to a return to the paradise of the future ; heaven first, then earth, and finally return to the eternal. A paradoxical symbol, for eternity is not a future state but a present which knows no end !

These same contrasts, these same understandings and these same non-understandings repeat themselves in all races and peoples, classes and individuals. Religions, sects, beliefs and rites have served, and even now serve, in diverse degrees as garments for their conceptions of the universe. Some of the religions are primitive and loaded with superstitions, which, on examination, would be found to be symbols, the original significance of which has been forgotten and of which only a literal interpretation, aiming at some sort of salvation through magic, survives at present. Others lean on tradition and authority and seek to unite men without

paying sufficient attention to individual differences. Some are now split up into sects like those stars whose fragments stud the heavens between Mars and Jupiter. Yet others have risen in response to particular needs, their expansion is recent, they have covered a small area of the world attracting to their fold evolved souls engaged in researches into things other than tradition. Creeds of seductive beauty, yet they are not always without danger ; their adepts have brought themselves to believe in their superiority over others and to declare, "There is none like us !" They preach about their own gifts and often live in pride.

Still the question may be put whether this pride is peculiar to them. Do not men of all faiths, at all epochs, show a tendency to believe and declare with sincerity "We possess the Truth," with a capital T, and "The others are in error" ? Even where different sects are found to tolerate one another, each believes itself to possess the exclusive Truth.

What does this mean ? Is it right to think that one alone of all religions of the world is true and all the others are wrong ? ; or that all are equally wrong, as the atheists and the materialists hold ? ; or is a third solution possible ?

Yes, there is a third solution. And it is this : all religions contain a part of Truth, none possesses it in its entirety.

Let us admit that it is so. Let us admit that the universe appears to us in the form of currents of energy and palpable matter ; but also that, lodged in the brain and nervous organisation of human beings, under the form of individual personalities, manifesting themselves by reflexes,

instincts, tendencies, intuitions, impulses, and sentiments, is an intelligence, a Will. Between all these material and spiritual forces reigns a mysterious interaction, an intercourse the complex nature of which mystifies our understanding and for ever transcends the categories of our reason. Nevertheless, our reason cannot but posit behind all these a Reason, a Sovereign Order. Our reason cannot but admit that what it calls chance is only a term to denote its ignorance, provisional or ultimate, of the bond which connects sentient beings and things. For, as the sages of old have declared, "You must be God before you can understand His designs." Man does not have the wisdom to understand the complexity of the infinite world of matter and spirit, in the midst of which he is placed.

Then what can man, this worm, accomplish? He grasps but the fragments of this order which passes his understanding, thanks to recurring events a knowledge of which is essential for him to live in this world. He grasps a little or much according to the degree of evolution which his intellect and intuition have reached. Sometimes he errs and pays dearly for it. Sometimes it may happen that his wisdom is grand in theory but in practice his egoism proves gross, and hence he has to pay heavily.

Here it is that religion puts in its appearance. To these naive views of man regarding the unknown Beyond, to these experiences fruitful or cruel, exalting or depressing, aiding the blossoming of spiritual life or suffocating the soul by the weight of its errors and its sins, religion gives certain names. To each concept is given a symbol, to each symbol a name. Is this an evil? It may be stated at the

very outset that it is an inevitable fact. It is true of all epochs and places—proof positive that this process responds to a natural desire of the human soul, possibly good, and that it is impossible to act otherwise. But what is it except a symbol? It is a sign, an attempt to lay hold of that which cannot be caught, an effort for digging, if one may say so, a trench for the universal and eternal flux with a view to appropriate a 'truth' or a 'law' limited in space and time.

In the light of these things one has to recognise that no symbol is eternal. In men who are far advanced in the ways of science, symbols of an elementary character must give place to those more varied which can better explain the complexity of facts as they appear to their eyes and understandings. To be satisfied with ancient symbols is to arrest evolution. To forget their vital significance is to lapse into superstition. Even if they are to be preserved, their meaning must be made more profound, if man is to advance along the way of spiritual perfection.

All these things can be clearly seen in the ritual aspect of religions which is built upon symbols, lights, colours, sounds, perfumes, words, suggestions, emotions and rites. If a ceremony is to be of any efficacy, it must elevate the soul from the cares of the work-a-day world towards loftier aspirations. If, on the contrary, it serves but to croon the soul into a false sense of security, to substitute a sense of illusory or magic security in the place of personal efforts to induce the quietism of dead dogmas instead of awakened intelligence, and to replace a fruitful emotional activity by inconsistent sentimentality—then it is bad. It becomes worse if the priestly classes use



it as a weapon to crush living souls and truth-seekers. It becomes altogether dangerous if this authority extends over a whole land and achieves the annihilation of all independent and challenging thinkers. Woe unto such lands ! They nip in the bud the elements of progress, they condemn wisdom to exile, beauty to misery, and Truth to beggary.

Thus the symbol, whether it be of a religious nature or not, is efficacious if only it takes into account all essential aspects of the subjacent Reality, the laws of the world both visible and invisible ; it is good if it can elevate man and enable him to conceive of a higher truth and a nobler life ; but it is altogether condemnable if it crushes aspiring minds and perpetuates among the masses a dead ritualism and a dead dogmatism, thus destroying the living kernel which, at first, was its *raison d'être*.

Few men seem prepared to accept these views to-day. Some fiercely cling on to their beliefs. Others forge a religion for themselves. Yet others flee from all religions. But such is the might of collective ideologies of an emotional and active nature that they erect 'Science' or 'Nation' into religion, little knowing that the new deities before whom they bow are as much exacting and cruel as the ancient superstitions, that like them they are but symbols, that tomorrow they will be supplanted by other symbols of a less exclusive and more universal complexion. For materialism does not cover the whole of science, nor the concept of nation the whole of humanity. They are composed of detached fragments only.

The day when come to understand that there is one Reality beneath all these diverse religious conceptions,

one Order and Energy which transcends our feeble reason but is felt as existing by our intuition, they will cease to fight on provocations, scientific or nationalistic. They will keep to their faiths but will respect that of their neighbour, and he in turn will respect theirs. "There are many rooms in my father's mansion," so Christ has said employing a luminous symbol.

What heavy responsibility do we shoulder, when we think of it, in thrusting belief or symbol, whatever it be, on a neighbour? Are all men on the same rung of the ladder of spiritual evolution? To the infant the symbols of the nursery will prove the most helpful. Chaos will reign in the world if each man were to rebuild the world according to his own pet notions, according to the dictates of his petty reason.

Collective symbols, in so far as they serve as carriers of Truths inexpressible without their help, are legitimate and good provided the hidden spirit in them, and not the literal cover, is emphasised. But what would result if petty men seek to impose their views on great souls—a daily event among the dictators of the Right or the Left in the Occident—and again what will be the effect if men, who believe themselves to be advanced but who are ignorant of the laws of the gradual evolution of individuals, desire to raise prematurely to their level unripe or simple beings who are by themselves incapable of it? In the first case the result will be revolt or duplicity, and in the second, failure and destruction, or success that is purely apparent and superficial. The cover of the symbol alone is adopted, the thing within is lost sight of. Europe and America are full of these demi-savants who have

been educated in institutions but who have no knowledge of real life.

The end of life is Life. Biological life leads to spiritual life. But each being grows towards the light according to its own rhythm. Nourishment should never be artificial. The school must bring about the bloom of body and soul and not their death. Religion too should elevate man and not crush him. If all religions did this, then would it soon be known that all symbols conceal the same fundamental truths. Is 'conceal' the word or 'reveal'? ; or let us put this way : to-day they hide, but to-morrow they will reveal, the profound unity which is at the bottom of all.

Children, inventors, and artists understand me. Everywhere in the world, they know what is meant by a noble life, a life of growth : forgetting oneself to give the better of oneself ;

forgetting oneself in one's devotion to a work, a work dictated by intuition, will, thought, considerations of art, of organised society, enlarged vision ; the feeling we are approaching a beauty, a truth, a justice which are ordinarily beyond us ; the growing conviction that the order of our creation is approaching the divine Order and our reason nearing the divine Reason.

All symbols which lead us to the realisation of this truth are good. This is the idea of the Way, (Jesus) of Tao (Laotse) of ascension.

All symbols which block this growth, this ascent, are to be condemned. "Become what thou art," so spoke Pindare more than twenty centuries ago. The day man understands this—whether he works for himself or another—will be for him the commencement of wisdom.

## NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

*By C. R. Srinivasan*

[The following is an address delivered by Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, editor of *Swadesamitran*, at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras on the occasion of the 76th Birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. He points out how the great Swami saved the soul of India.]

I would like you to project your thoughts to the conditions that prevailed when Swami Vivekananda took birth. Through ignorance and prejudice we had lost faith in the greatness of our past ; the glamour of an alien civilisation held us in fee. From the mechanical to the metaphysical plane, from sartorial to spiritual needs, our entire outlook was being dominated and directed by the West. Society was being re-modelled, and in the process, was fast shedding all that it should have cherished.

The new generation was being bred to a false measure of values, and the result was an ever widening chasm between the educated and the uneducated in the country. Disowning the East yet dishonoured by the West, this new born society was really moving rudderless. It was powerless for good, for it had lost contact with the country. It was powerless, even for mischief, for it had lost the ear of the masses, as it affected an alien tongue even for the privacy of its thoughts. Few had the vision or the wisdom to

see whither conditions were tending and fewer still possessed the courage and determination to carry through the cleansing campaign that these conditions invited. It was at this hour of destiny that Swami Vivekananda was born. His firm grasp of fundamentals saved him from the pitfalls that surrounded him. By divine grace, he came under the influence of a great soul while yet in his teens. Precocious and persevering in his studies, he soon reached the limits of the school of rationalistic thought. His Master taught him to realise what he could not rationalise, and released his vision to boundless proportions. Supplementing thus Anumana by Anubhava, he realised for the first time the magnificent heritage we are heir to. He was not content to realise it for himself ; he wanted others to share with him the joys of that realisation. How to bring this about ? A wandering fakir without power or prestige could not revolutionalise thought in this country, and until the upper ten were reclaimed to a truer perception of values, no dynamic form could be given to the urge that was seething within him. He wandered all over the country seeking for light and at last he found it in Cape Comorin. What was the problem that evaded solution ? Men of his generation had bartered away the Aladin's Lamp in their possession for imported lamps. We all know the story of Aladin's lamp. Dirty and ill-kept as it was, it possessed virtues which no new lamp could possess. You had only to burnish up the old lamp to call up servants of the Lord ready to do your behests, however extravagant or impossible they may be. Of that character and so potent in effect, was the light that we inherited from our

forefathers ; we had not merely neglected but discarded it for new lights. How to make our people realise what they had lost in sheer ignorance and folly ? The glamour of the West, reinforced by an alien administration, had first to be countered and conquered before the process of regeneration and revolution could be taken on hand. With the vision denied to ordinary mortals, Swami Vivekananda saw that the resurrection of the East must come from the West. The West must appreciate the heritage of the East before those born to it would concede its value. After weeks of suspense, amidst doubts and misgivings, yet guided by an unseen Power, Swami Vivekananda resolved to travel West to redeem the East.

At the Parliament of Religions, the banner of the East was unfurled to an awed and admiring crowd of savants and sceptics. The cheers that followed Swamiji's exposition of the Vedantic school of thought, found an answering echo in the East. But its proximate result took a different shape in India. If I am asked to date the birth of nationalism in this country, I would put it at 1893. Vivekananda created a stir in the West. It was nothing compared to the storm that he raised in the East. Three years he stayed out there in the West to consolidate the position and prestige he had won for himself and for his country and then the conquering hero returned home. On his return he had his work cut out to direct and divert the energy and enthusiasm he had created, along fruitful channels. It was then that he proceeded to create the organisation for sustained work. When his end was approaching none was more conscious of it than he himself ; his master had already predict-

ed that he would not live long, once he learnt who and what he was. But he lived long enough to create a live organisation and to-day it is propagating the gospel of service to the millions in need of succour and sustenance. The humanitarian bias that he gave to the Ramakrishna Mission has helped it to survive the loss it sustained in him presently. For myself, I wish I had been born ten years earlier, or he had died ten years later. To have lived while yet he lived, and to have not come into contact with him is a tragedy too deep for tears. His loving disciples have collated their recollections and compiled a biography which I would request everyone to read, mark and inwardly digest. There lies a moving tale whose appeal words cannot describe. If I am asked to say what is the greatest service Swami Vivekananda did for this country, I will say that he saved the soul of this country. The body was already in bondage, and the soul was fast passing into bondage ; he arrested the process ; not merely arrested it, but gave the soul sufficient strength and sustenance to cast off the coils choking the body. Vivekananda gave us first, self-knowledge, next, self-respect, and last but not least, self-control. These three in time should lead to sovereign power. Vivekananda was more than a Vedantic scholar. He conceived religion as a dynamic force in the normal day-to-day life of the people ; he was clearly conscious that any movement of mass uplift in this country must carry moral sanctions behind it if it is to succeed and survive. Service was his religion, and in the succour and sustenance of the weak and afflicted, the poor and the disabled, the unfortunate and the improvident, he discovered for hu-

manity the surest path of salvation. He recognised the realities and potentialities of Indian culture, but as his Gurudeva said, an empty stomach was no fit vehicle for religion. The first thing to be done was to rouse and raise the masses. That is why on every occasion he has laid stress on the principles of service and sacrifice as leverage for the redemption of India. This prophetic vision has since found ample confirmation in the history of India during the past fifteen years. I do not know if many have realised it, but to me there appears to be a very strong and sustained similarity in outlook and vision between Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. The seeds sown by Vivekananda have been watered and weeded by Gandhiji. You find the latter lays the same emphasis on truth and non-violence, on service and sacrifice that distinguished Swami Vivekananda's exposition of thought. The rousing of the masses to a consciousness of the higher life that awaits them, if they would only stretch forth their hands, has been carried through to a remarkable degree, with marvellous results. Talking of the Congress, I remember a passage in the biography of Vivekananda, when Aswani Kumar Datta questioned Swami Vivekananda on the work Congress was then doing. Vivekananda said he had no faith in Congress work so far, and so long as the Congress was out of touch with the masses ; the mere passing of resolutions could not bring freedom. Gandhiji took up the work where Vivekananda left it. Thanks to the precepts and example of Mahatma Gandhi, a new generation has been aligned to the field of service imbued with the ideals of self-respect, self-re-

liance and self-sacrifice. All this encourages me to hope that the old Lamp that was so lightly discarded in

exchange for new ones, has now been redeemed to light our way in the visible darkness that still envelops us.

## MOUNT KAILAS—THE SYMBOL OF PERFECTION

*By Swami Chidbhavananda*

[Swami Chidbhavananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. He went on a pilgrimage to Kailas last summer. The following reflections on that sacred mount are based on his experiences there.]

**T**HERE are on this earth certain spots the beauty and charm of which verge on divinity. They are not merely a source of inspiration for poets and philosophers, but are also veritable symbols of moral and spiritual excellence which man can attain if he so chooses. When placed on such heavenly spots, man cannot help spontaneously pondering over the meaning and purpose of life. The genius of the Indian sages took advantage of such sublime spots and converted them into places of pilgrimage. As time rolled on, connected with these places grew innumerable traditions which added to their sanctity. One of such places, worthy of a visit at any cost, is the Mount Kailas in the Western Tibet on the trans-Himalayan region. The Hindus and a section of the Buddhists hold this as heaven on earth. Innumerable saints are said to have attained perfection here in days of yore.

Tradition has it that the five Pandava brothers concluded their eventful career by making a pilgrimage to Mount Kailas. Fall is inevitable for him who looks back while on the path to perfection. Such is the divine law. It so happened that the younger brothers began to sink one after another. King Yudhishtira,

the eldest, the embodiment of virtue and the leader of the party, heard from time to time of their fall but would not himself turn back lest he should also meet with a similar fate. He understood that some defect or other was the cause of the fall of all his brothers. Paying heed to them would not mend matters. With a single-minded devotion he managed to reach the threshold to heaven. But there was not the slightest trace of selfishness in King Yudhishtira in his abandoning the fallen brothers. For curiously enough a dog managed to accompany him up to the gate of heaven, beyond which the virtuous king was allowed but not the anxious animal. Yudhishtira refused to enter heaven unless the dog that accompanied him also was given the same privilege. Such was his spirit of non-covetousness that out of fellow-feeling for an abject animal he was prepared to forgo the kingdom of heaven. Then the dog had to be allowed in along with him. The inviolable law is that in the progress towards perfection one's own merit counts for everything. As a corollary to this comes the maxim that many are called but few are chosen. To the Hindus this pilgrimage to Kailas by the Pan-

dava brothers stands as an object-lesson for all time to come.

Among the routes to Mount Kailas, that which goes from Almora *via* Lipu Lake Pass is the most popular one. Hardships and trials are not unmanageable on this path. Kailas is about 250 miles from Almora and it takes about seven weeks to return there after accomplishing the pilgrimage. Snow which forms the natural barrier across the Lipu Lake Pass begins to give way in the middle of June, and hence that is the best time to commence the pilgrimage from Almora. Here one has to bid adieu to all modern modes of conveyance. Coolies and ponies can be had to transport the luggage. The best method of doing this pilgrimage is by walking the entire distance, but those who do not have the pluck and energy to do so can ride except in one or two stages. For the first one hundred and fifty miles there are wayside houses and shops to take shelter in. At Garbyang, the last Indian village, tents and ponies can be hired. Coolies will not find it possible to carry the luggage above that village. A good guide has to be procured from this place to lead the pilgrims' party into Tibet. Guns also have to be hired here to protect men, animals and property against dacoits. While in Tibet there is no other alternative but to live in tents. Garbyang is also the last stage where fuel can be had. Cooking in Tibet has to be done with kerosene oil stove. Sufficient provisions, warm clothings and medicines have to be taken all along from Almora.

Though for a brief period of seven weeks, this pilgrimage imposes on persons who undertake it a severe type of trial and discipline. The lazy and the slothful will hardly find it

possible to cope with the situation. From the early hours in the morning till perhaps late at night one has to be up and doing. The details of the daily religious life have to be scrupulously observed while being constantly on the move. But nothing pleases the pilgrim so much as carrying out the daily programme. Every well-spent day becomes a day of joy and achievement. What else is life if it is not the sum total of the days well or ill spent? The very first lesson that this pilgrimage teaches is that if man has learnt to utilise his time properly, he is bound to be crowned with success.

Another great effect of this pilgrimage is that it compels man to come out in his true colour. Under normal circumstance the stuff of which a man is really made does not come often to light. Here at every stage the personality is put to test, and constant exertion leads to untold weariness. Comfort worth mentioning is nowhere to be had. In spite of all the precautions, the body begins to lose its original vigour and strength. What was originally intended to be a pilgrimage, a holy act, now involuntarily becomes a life and death struggle. Man can no more hide his nature. The propensity of an animal or an angel becomes prominent in him. As such the pilgrims, by their behaviour, clearly fall under two broad headings—the self-seeking and the self-denying. The former recoils into selfishness and pays no heed to the needs of his fellow pilgrims. The latter is ever ready to offer his everything unconditionally for the welfare of others. In short, to study human nature as well as to put oneself to the test, no occasion is more fitting than this pilgrimage. It

may be aptly termed the epitome of an entire spiritual career.

The ups and downs on the way are veritable representations of human life. The path to heaven is not always easy and smooth. Required tests and tribulations have to be passed through. Sky-scraping walls have to be crossed over, one after another. Huge ascents and descents will be alternately presenting themselves before the pilgrim. The Himalayan rain and thunder is an ordeal by itself. The flow of water on and across the rough paths, the blowing of ice-cold wind, land slips, stone falls, walking over crudely constructed insecure bridges across dashing rivers, fording the foaming streams where even an apology for a bridge is totally missing, accommodating on damp floors with dense smoke all round, taking shelter in dingy huts with leaky roof above, packing and unpacking one's belongings day after day—these are not altogether inviting to the frail mortals.

But there is as a compensation the other side of the picture. The Himalayas are the place to see Nature in all her magnificence. Mountains almost vertical in structure peep one above the other into the secrets of heaven. Rain-bearing clouds caught up among these closely-piled lofty walls, roll up and down in mighty waves, offering an awe-inspiring sight, until they empty themselves in torrents among dales and deep ravines. It is yet to be known whether Nature has been so lavish elsewhere in vegetation. Melodious songs of birds in dense extensive forests transport one with joy. There is no end to varieties and magnitudes in waterfalls. Here it thunders and roars frightening man out of his wits ; there it

gushes out in milky volumes. Innumerable rain-bows dance attendance upon them as they fall in troubled cascades. At one place water takes a bold leap from dizzy heights, but before it reaches the chasm below, its volume vanishes into tiny floating particles of pearls. Yonder it seems as a long hanging silver rope. At another place the fall commences apparently from a rocky support, but actually seems to descend from the heavens. No human contrivance can compare with the luxury of the spray bath that Nature offers here and there. Thus if there is danger and discomfort on one side, there is also on the other side charm and happiness to compensate. The double aspect of Nature—terror and sweetness—can be seen nowhere so vividly as on the Himalayas.

Crossing the Lipu Lake Pass is an experience by itself. This has to be ventured just when it dawns and only if weather promises to be fine. Snow fall and the thawing of snow when the sun is high up are both equally dangerous. The elevation of this pass is about 16,800 feet above sea-level. The atmosphere gets visibly rarefied at this altitude, and breathing becomes rather difficult. One is forced to climb up rather slowly and make frequent halts while panting for breath. The heart begins to palpitate and the head to reel. A sense of nausea very often overtakes one. Care should be taken that the stomach is not kept empty ; for that aggravates the giddiness all the more. The ascent is over three miles, but the troubles are more than rewarded on reaching the top. Doubt comes automatically whether it is a physical world or a dreamland in which one is placed. Turn wherever one may, a

grand panorama is presented. The glaring snow all round makes one feel as if transported into a region of lustre. It is verily the gateway to heaven. On the India side stretch for miles together mighty mountains that link heaven and earth together. And Nature has lavished on them colours and forms worthy of none other than gods. On the Tibetan side the spectacle is different. There the stainless space merges into infinity. The experience may well nigh be compared with transcendental knowledge in which God with and without attributes is realised. This is after all a display of Nature which is said to be the mere shadow of the ultimate reality. But if the shadow itself is so grand and inspiring, how much more so ought to be the Substance! Both to the eye and the mind there is a sumptuous feast when one gets over this pass.

A few days' travel in Tibet brings the pilgrim all on a sudden in the presence of another panorama. Its perspective is more intensive than extensive. What the pilgrim had been dreaming of for a long time, what he had longed to see face to face, for what he had even risked his life—is now actually before him. He sees Mount Kailas. At the sight of this long desired for object man loses himself in wild joy; he is transported into ecstasy. Mind is drawn to that mysterious Mount as iron to a magnet. While in that region it constantly floats in a wide intense state of consciousness. All the toils and troubles are more than amply rewarded. Divine bliss marks the pilgrim for its own.

Towering majestically high up above the rest of the snow-clad peaks stands Mount Kailas, the perpetual source of inspiration. It is of the shape of a gigantic Shivalingam.

Snow-covered as it is, day and night it is set in contrast with the deep blue vault above. With the change of time and weather it seems to undergo magical transformation. When bathed with the beams of the rising sun Mount Kailas is a mass of burnished gold. Neither word nor mind can fully enter into the glory of it. On clear days it is as if several suns have concentrated themselves there without their burning effect. At dusk it is a heap of red lotuses. Myriad-coloured clouds gathering on Kailas resemble wreaths showered by celestials.

The panorama is complete with Lake Manasarowar and Mount Mandhata. A doubt arises whether the lake is not, as its name suggests, more a projection of the mind than external reality. With all the minor details of its sublime formation, it seems as if some divine architect had planned this celestial spectacle. A vast square of crystal-pure water, picturesque banks on all its sides, Mandhata to the south and Kailas to the north like two diamonds on either side of an emerald, large tracts of sand with multifarious hues—all these put together make one feel whether one is not placed in some fairyland.

The southern mount is named after Mandhata, the sage who had performed penance there. In structure it is almost akin to Kailas. Between the two is the beautiful lake representing the mind. What actually stands between man and God is the mind. Through the vicissitudes of life man is consciously or unconsciously making a pilgrimage towards Godhead. As he attains perfection he becomes akin to God. That is possible by purifying the mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Lake



Manasarowar stands for the mind and all that it ought to be. From Mandhata a clear reflection of Kailas can be seen in that lake. In the joy of it Mandhata is clean forgotten. Man's pilgrimage towards perfection culminates in his effecting the complete purification of mind. There the as-

sumed difference between man and God vanishes. Man merges in God or Cosmic Consciousness. This purview of Mount Kailas and its surroundings not merely symbolises this great truth but also acts as an eternal source of inspiration to all those who wend their way Godward.

## WHO IS A TRUE SRI VAISHNAVA?

By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint editor of *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the R. K. Mission. A good Sri Vaishnava himself and a scholar of eminence, his writing is remarkable for accuracy, fervour and suggestiveness. In this and other essays he will give an exposition of the spirit and principles of the Sri Vaishnava faith—one of the two most influential forms of religion in South India.]

**A** VAISHNAVA is literally a person who is bound by ties of eternal relationship to Vishnu, the Supreme Omnipresent Being. But since this relationship is shared indiscriminately by all beings in this universe, irrespective of its being recognised, felt or realised by them, the appellation truly belongs to that individual who, possessing at least an intellectual comprehension of that supreme relationship, struggles his best to realise it in his daily life. The term 'Vaishnava', strictly speaking, does not connote a person who wears a particular mark on his forehead or particular emblems on his arms, who worships God in a particular way or at specified times, or who faithfully carries out the rituals enjoined in the standard texts, although all these external marks and acts may stand associated with him by virtue of the force of the sacred traditions and commendable conventions he has inherited from his great ancestors. The ideal Sri Vaishnava should be judged more by his inner spiritual attainments than

by outer accessories and appearances. He is a person who has completely given up all attachments and looks upon God as his sole proprietor, protector and refuge. Being impressed with a sense of the utter impotence of the individual ego and its complete dependence on the Supreme Being, he has unbounded faith in God as his only Saviour, and is an embodiment of wisdom, renunciation, devotion, humility and loving selfless service to God—a service which extends to, and embraces, all His creatures.

### HIS IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS

The illustrious saint Nannalwar, the great progenitor of the Sri Vaishnava race, is the cherished ideal of all Sri Vaishnavas. Alvars are those that have dived into the ocean of Prema or God-love and attained union with God. They are ever perfect and come down at the command of God to restore spiritual equilibrium on earth. They possess not only intuitive knowledge and vision of God like the Vedic Rishis but are also blessed with in-

tense devotion for its own sake, which such knowledge and vision inspire in them. Intuitive vision of God blossoms into inspiration or maddening devotion for Him, which in time ripens into divine ecstasy and unceasing rapturous service to Him. To this all the Alvars bear eloquent testimony ; and especially Nammalwar. His passionate love and intense yearning for God, culminating now and then in rapturous union with Him, and his keen longings for eternal joyous service on His behalf are the beacon lights on the hill of Divinity that beckon all sincere Vaishnavas to follow his footsteps, and attain the summit of his spiritual experiences. His exalted and varied spiritual experiences and moods as depicted in his immortal hymns, a thousand in number (which contain the quintessence of the Vedas), form the main source of daily and hourly inspiration to Vaishnavas. The beloved Sri Krishna was to Nammalwar ' the food he took, the water he drank, and the betel he chewed ', which means that God was the sustainer, the nourisher and the source of all enjoyments. None could answer so well as he to the description of the Mahatma in the Gita, " At the end of a thousand births the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me, realising that Vasudeva is all (both the means and the end of spiritual realisation). Very rare is that great soul." He is therefore looked upon as part and parcel of God, and pious Vaishnavas call to this day the lotus feet of God by the endearing term ' Sathakopa ', another name for Nammalwar. Devotion to Him, as the lotus feet of God or as the perfect Guru or illumined Teacher, is a more effective means of saving oneself than even devotion to God.

Yet the easiest and the most potent means of saving oneself according to Vaishnavas is an intense and abiding faith in Sri Ramanuja, the greatest apostle of Vaishnavism ; and it is a privilege of every Sri Vaishnava to refer to himself as ' Ramanuja Dasa ' (the devoted servant of Ramanuja). If Nammalwar was the mother of the Tamil Vedas, Sri Ramanuja was the foster-mother ; if the Alvar was the first great teacher of Vaishnavism, the Acharya was the best exponent and promulgator of it ; and if the former was the progenitor of the Vaishnava race, the latter was the Divine Messiah of the race. Sri Ramanuja occupies a unique position among the Vaishnava Gurus by virtue of his torrential spiritual personality and his profound redeeming grace. He is the connecting link between his predecessors and his successors in the chain of teachers, both of whom were equally proud of their relationship with him and considered themselves blessed thereby. He is regarded as the best mediator between man and God and is the refuge of all Vaishnavas, who willingly surrender themselves at his sacred feet with love and faith. Such was the astoundingly phenomenal success of his spiritual mission on earth that even God, according to tradition, paid His tribute of praise and condescend to assume a human form and seek his benign protection like an ordinary mortal. No wonder then that every Vaishnava has the settled conviction that, worthy or unworthy, whoever invokes the grace of Sri Ramanuja earnestly is sure to attain liberation from the thralldom of mortal existence.

Devotion to Ramanuja accompanied by self-surrender to his irresistible

power of protection is therefore incumbent on every Vaishnava. He should saturate his mind through and through with the teachings and experiences of the great Alvars and Acharyas, and by constant meditation on their lives and immortal thoughts and feelings he should develop an utter disgust towards things of the earth and an insatiable three-fold hunger for God, for His love, and for service to Him and His devotees at all times, in all places and under all conditions, unmindful of even the least consideration of personal reward or selfish satisfaction. Knowing that there are three kinds of seekers in this world—seekers after wealth and sense enjoyment, seekers after Atman or the immortal soul and the state of mere isolation of the Atman from all its vehicles and imperfections that adhere to it, and seekers after God, who alone can satisfy the keenest longings of the Atman—he should strive in his daily life to shun the ignoble quest of the first group and to avoid the pitfall of God-less soul-isolation and soul-consciousness as distinguished from God-consciousness, and conduct himself in such a way that a hankering after God may necessarily develop in his mind and ripen into an intense yearning that knows neither cessation nor relaxation until the end is achieved. His constant and unremitting endeavour should be to consecrate the bodily powers and all the faculties of his mind and soul to the service of God and His devotees in some form or other, and to make his intellect, heart and hand work in harmonious combination towards the ideal of one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Being. Devotees there are in the world who no doubt look upon God as the end of all their endeav-

ours, but employ the finite means at the disposal of their limited resources to gain the Infinite Being; and devotees there are again, who, with their well-established knowledge of the All-Merciful and Almighty God as the only means, do not flinch to employ Him as the means for satisfying their worldly and selfish ends—such is the exploitation of even God by man in his blindness. But the Vaishnava looks upon God as the sole means and the sole end. He realises that the deliberate acceptance of such a high ideal in contravention of all existing conventions and established practice in the realms of ordinary religious life, involves tremendous renunciation of one's own will and perpetual vigilance; yet not a whit daunted by the immensity of the ideal, and relying firmly on the super-abundant redeeming grace of the Proprietor of all souls, he looks upon God as the eternal means and rejects self-will, self-effort and self-seeking as the products of ignorance and egotism. While looking upon God as the end of all his strivings, he should utterly disregard all considerations of individual weal or woe and cultivate an intense longing to serve God according to His sweet will and pleasure, and to keep his body, mind and soul in readiness for being sacrificed on His behalf on any occasion. His yearning for the beatific vision of God should be so deep and overwhelming that at times his breath might stop automatically and he may become drowned in God-consciousness. While looking upon God as the means, he desists from the performance of any activity with the idea that it might be a means for the attainment of God-realisation; and while looking upon God as the end, the intense love he bears towards God,

and his unquenchable thirst for service inspire him to do deeds of loving service to Him ; but even here the appropriation of the joy of service to his own self is entirely forbidden. Keeping such high ideals in view, he constantly and fervently prays to God for conferring on him an intense devotion to Him, as all other qualities essential for an aspirant after God-realisation have their origin in such devotion. The soul-attracting, infatuating, bewitching beauty of God, when meditated upon by him, wipes out even the least trace of the expectation of enjoyment from sense-objects. God's grace breeds disgust towards, and aversion for, sense pleasures. The aspirant's desire to adopt the observances of the great devotees rouses in him a fear to indulge in sense enjoyments ; and yet the governing factor in this fear and avoidance is not so much a knowledge of the attendant miseries, as the knowledge of the inconsistency of egoistic activity and sense enjoyment with the true and inherent nature of the soul, namely, its complete dependence on God. It is the realisation of this true nature of the soul that is at the basis of both renunciation and service—renunciation while looking upon God as the sole means, and service while looking upon God as the end. The growing knowledge of the soul's dependence upon God crushes the impure and false sense of ego in the aspirant and awakens the pure and real ego-consciousness which while serving God, manifests itself as the consciousness of his being the Lord's eternal servant, and while renouncing all self-exertion, manifests as the conviction that God is the sole means.

Man, as he is psychologically constituted, is a compound of three eter-

nal entities—matter, soul and God. When the inertness of matter asserts itself in the Vaishnava, he becomes a victim to the feelings of ignorance and impotence and he looks upon God as the sole means. Then the attitude of extreme dependence on the Lord, in the capacity of a tool in His hand, becomes most natural to him. At times when the knowing soul asserts its own nature, the feeling of responsibility or agentship rises spontaneously in his mind ; and then the Vaishnava, contemplating on the all-loving nature of God and His countless spiritual attributes, plunges himself forthwith and whole-heartedly into all kinds of service to God with an indefatigable zeal, and looks upon God as the sole end of all his strivings. The ordinary man's mind is a pendulum swinging between the extremes of complete dependence on God and complete individual responsibility. But the Vaishnava, in whichever direction his mind may be swinging, should sublimate its activity by the deliberate choice of either of the ideals of complete, tool-like dependence on God, or, of the eternal, devoted servant of God. For the majority of mankind at the normal level of consciousness, only inertness and knowledge assert themselves. But when the God-aspect in man predominates at rare intervals, man's mind is overwhelmed with devotion for Him ; his personality is, for the time being, lost in God-consciousness ; and in that exalted state of mind he may either assume an attitude of complete dependence and surrender or put forth mighty efforts for the amelioration of society or for his own spiritual uplift, with a view to serve God to his utmost capacity ; but in either case the state is the outcome of Prema or intense love

for God, and is worth its weight in gold, since the self is completely annihilated therein. Ordinary sense-bound souls devoid of higher longings and even struggling aspirants of the lowest type, as they are overpowered by the inertness of matter-consciousness which is their normal level, resort to self-surrender out of the deep-seated feelings of impotence and ignorance. The Acharyas or mighty teachers gifted with divine wisdom and an intuitive insight into the true nature of the soul, as they are overpowered by such knowledge at their normal level of consciousness, take to the path of self-surrender finding the irreconcilability of other attitudes with the true knowledge of the soul. But the Alvars or the Supreme devotees of God with settled preponderance of pure devotion to Him or Prema for those to whom God-consciousness is the normal level of consciousness, are pushed along the path of self-surrender by the sheer force of the inebriation produced by Prema. To rise from matter-consciousness through soul-consciousness to God-consciousness is the cherished aspiration of all earnest Vaishnavas. It is the devout wish of every Vaishnava that the Himalayan grace of his Acharya or God would produce in him, at least on the eve of his departure from this world, such a hunger for God-vision as their great Acharya Nammalwar had felt, and as could not but bestow upon his soul the deliverance from the woes of mortal existence and transport it to the transcendental Abode of the Supreme Being where alone is everlasting life, full of joy and service.

#### THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF HIS LIFE

Behind the regulated life of every thoughtful man with a settled purpose in life is a philosophy that furnishes its basis, supplies the governing principle of his life and holds out the glorious ideal that is perpetually drawing him nearer and nearer to itself. The sway of this philosophy over life is in proportion to its being established on the adamant foundations of unimpeachable authority in the form of Divine revelation or competent testimony of great seers of truth; for such authority alone naturally dispels the cloud of intellectual disbelief and furnishes the necessary motive power for earnest endeavour. The philosophical doctrines on which the life of a Vaishnava rests are age-long and as old as the Upanishads. For the Upanishads declare, "This Atman cannot be attained by fine speech, intelligence or even by profound learning. Whomsoever the Atman chooses, by him It is attained." Again the Sastras declare in unequivocal terms, "The soul is the property and Brahman is the Proprietor absolute of all souls," and again, "All individual souls, by their very inherent nature are slaves (devoted servants) to the Supreme Being; none other is the relationship between the two, whether in the bound or liberated state of the individual soul." Such being the true nature of the soul, the deep-rooted and widely prevalent belief that an individual can save himself by his own effort is but the offspring of ignorance, error and delusion as to the true nature of the soul and its eternal relationship to the Supreme Being. Salvation lies therefore in the right knowledge of the in-

dividual's dependence upon God and his existence solely for the eternal service of God and His devotees, inspired by no motives of reward or enjoyment, this-worldly or other-worldly, and also in the translation of such knowledge into practice in actual life. The Vaishnava lays less stress on what he considers to be the external attributes of the soul such as knowledge and bliss than on its internal and indispensable attribute or nature of dependence on God, without which the soul is, as it were non-existent. The knowledge aspect of the soul leads irresistibly to the feeling of responsible actorship which tries by egoistic effort to shun vice and seek virtue ; but such a feeling is revolting to

the knower of the true nature of the soul. The Divine Author of the Gita says : " The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings causing all beings, by His Maya, to revolve as if mounted on a machine." Above all, even the self-willed effort to free oneself of all sins stultifies itself ; for the Sastras ask in unmistakable terms : " What graver sin can a man commit than that of stealing the Atman that belongs to God and making it his own ? " It is under such circumstances and because of such considerations that the enlightened Vaishnava is compelled to regard God as the sole means and as the sole end, and to make the end the means and the means the end.

*(To be continued)*

## MODERN THOUGHT AND VEDANTA

*By Swami Pranaveshananda*

[Swami Pranaveshananda, the head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon, makes, in the following article, a review of some of the important conclusions of modern science on topics like matter, life and consciousness, and presents side by side the strikingly similar conclusions of the Vedantic thinkers. The contrast also is drawn wherever necessary.]

### I

#### WHAT IS MODERN THOUGHT

**M**ODERN thought may be defined as the views and opinions expressed recently by the scientists and philosophers of the West regarding the visible and the invisible universe as well as life based not only on theory but also on facts revealed by observation and investigation. In arriving at conclusions these scientists have started with an analysis of the external world ; but at the ultimate stages of their enquiry they have had to depend upon certain mathematical symbols of a rather conceptual type,

which nevertheless have helped them to state with certitude facts genuine and unknown before. It is now generally evident that the whole texture of scientific and philosophic thought has undergone a sort of metamorphosis within the last 30 or 40 years. The scientists of to-day are no more satisfied with a purely materialistic explanation of the universe which the 19th century science offered as the final word. The leaders of scientific thought to-day such as Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Eddington, Prof. Albert Einstein and others are at one in holding that modern scientific knowledge is heading towards a non-

material reality. These eminent scientists do not confine themselves to scientific research only, but are also making excursions in the realm of philosophy. For it is now evident that researches in the field of Physics and Astronomy have raised philosophical speculations. Regarding the relation of science to philosophy Dr. A. N. Whitehead says, "There can be no living science unless there is a wide-spread conviction of an order of things, and in particular of the order of nature." Einstein concurs with Whitehead in this opinion. The motive of science, as understood generally, is the discovery of facts about the universe, the 'why' and 'wherefore' of those discovered facts being left to philosophy to explain. But modern thought has combined both these functions. Modern thought, it is true, has not reached the limit of knowledge. This is because the meaning of certain phenomena and the background of this physical world itself are yet a sealed book to the present-day scientific investigators.

#### INDIAN THOUGHT

It must be said to the credit of the Indian sages that they arrived at similar views some 2,000 years ago by analysing their own mind—the internal world. Their views are not rendered obsolete by subsequent discoveries. These ancient Aryan thinkers found out by experience that the study of the external world, however accurate it might be, would not be perfect without a search in the innermost recesses of the human heart. Man might analyse the external world for ages but that would give no definite solution to his problems. The sages found that a sensuous attachment to the external world spread a

veil, as it were, between the seeker of Truth and the Truth, and that this veil could not be removed by external means. So turning back from the external, the sages found in their own purified and detached mind the best means of knowing Reality. This is the distinguishing feature of Indian thought. By analysing their own minds the thinkers of India gradually realised that the external universe is only a faint reflection of the internal, and that the solution of the problems of life lies in that emporium of all knowledge, *viz.*, the human soul. The ancient thought of India has lighted up regions where the light of modern thought of the West has never penetrated. It too is scientific, definite and all-embracing, and is within the reach of every sincere enquirer who undergoes the requisite mental and moral discipline. Side by side with the findings of the sages we shall now proceed to study the novel views given by modern scientists regarding Matter, Creation and Dissolution of the Universe, Life, Evolution, Mind, Consciousness, Law of Casualty and the Ultimate Reality.

#### II

##### MATTER

Scientists of the West once regarded matter as an enduring substance built up out of rigid lumps of reality known as atoms, which are fixed, indivisible and eternally indestructible. They conceived it as existing in space and persisting in time. This is no longer believed by the modern scientists. The atoms which make up matter, when reduced to their ultimate entities, are now broken up into little particles of electricity called electrons and protons. Thus it has been prov-

ed that matter practically transforms itself into electric energy. These electrons and protons are invisible entities, but in certain cases it is said that electrons can be driven out of atoms and the actual path of electrons, darting at tremendous speed, can be photographed as they are seen through faint mists in closed tubes. Although they are called particles of electricity, yet it is not known what they are precisely. This much can be said that it is an activity of a mysterious nature. So matter in its final analysis loses its substantiality and presents itself as varying combinations, re-combinations and complex arrangements of electrons and protons. These are no more subjects of speculative philosophy but are demonstrable scientific truths. Says Jeans: "That because matter affects our senses as substantial, that is not to be taken as a revelation of matter. In modern science the substantiality of matter has gone. It has passed from the region of theory and become accepted science, and solid matter is an association of atoms which in turn are associations of electrons and protons, purely non-material entities." Eddington says that the notion of substance has dropped out of modern science and has been dissolved away into a set of mathematical relations between entities of whose nature we know nothing. But there is one species of matter, he suggests, of which we have a more intimate knowledge than is obtainable by the measuring instruments of science. When a man is thinking and feeling, our scientific instruments would reveal nothing but motions of the particles of brain, and in this fact, according to Eddington, lies the clue to the understanding of the nature of matter. That is to say,

the nature of matter is of the same nature as thoughts, feelings and emotions—in one word it is mental. According to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, matter is only a string of events as fleeting as thoughts, and science tells us nothing of their actual nature. The old materialists regarded matter as something different from fleeting thoughts due to its apparent solidarity and permanence. Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the Law of Gravitation, regarded matter, space and time as three separate and independent entities. They were independent in the sense that matter merely occupied time and space, and space remained the same whether it was occupied by matter or not, and the same was true of time. So space and time were regarded as quite independent of matter. They are no longer so. In Relativity Theory, the notion of time and of objective space as separate independent entities has given place to the notion of space-time as inseparable and one actual reality. Einstein calls time as the four-dimensional continuum, of which three dimensional matter itself is a part, and not something existing separately. Time according to this theory is not terrestrial or parochial but static; and in virtue of this, particular events perpetually come into and pass out of existence. And the forms which these events take are determined by space which is a permanent and universal matrix of all that changes and becomes. So the objective conception of space has been discarded by the present-day science. This Theory of Relativity shows that there is something in this universe which evades our intelligence, but a certain aspect of this unity has been picked out by the mind and is called matter. Thus



the mind partitions out the space and time in which material entities exist. This amounts to saying that this universe of time, space and matter, as understood by us, is only a creation of mind itself.

According to Advaita Vedanta matter is also mental, it is externalised thought. In fact matter and spirit are two different forms of one substance, although they appear to be two distinct things. Says Chandogya Upanishad (vi, 2): "Existence alone, my dear, was there in the beginning, one without a second. It willed, 'May I become many.'" 'It' and its antecedent Existence stand here for the Supreme Being. This act of seeing or willing endows the Being with intelligence, and it is this Intelligent Being that becomes all this universe of matter with all its modifications. In the Taittiriya Upanishad (II,1) we have the following description of creation: "From this Supreme Self ether came, from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, etc." From the Atman has evolved first ether, the source of matter and space. Akasa or ether has been described by Sankara as one infinite, imponderable, inert and all-pervasive product. It stands for both space and exceedingly fine matter which fills all space. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasa. It is the Akasa that becomes the air, the fire, the water and the earth—in fact all that we see and perceive. But Akasa, like the electrons of the modern scientists, is not visible. It is so subtle that it is beyond all perception. It can be seen only when it takes a gross form. In the beginning of creation there was only the Atman. At the end of a cycle of

existence dissolution follows by a reversal of the order of creation; earth goes back to its source, water, water to fire, fire to air, air to Akasa and Akasa again resolves itself into its source, the Atman. Sankara says that the unchangeable Atman does not really change into Akasa and the rest, but the whole universe is only an apparent manifestation of that Atman. To make this clear, he gives the illustration of the rope-snake. Due to want of proper light or some defect in the vision, a rope may appear as a snake, in which case the rope evidently does not change into a real snake. The Atman likewise does not really change into Akasa and the rest. It remains unchanged and unchangeable, but through the veil of Maya or time, space and causation, we see the difference. This, Sankara calls *Vivarta* or apparent manifestation. Maya plays its part only through the externalised mind and senses which mediate our experience of the world of matter. Thought itself, through externalised mind and senses, becomes materialised, as it were. That is why matter is called externalised thought. In this respect there is no difference between the Indian and the Western view stated above. The Western scientist as well as the Indian seer says that matter is mental.

With Einstein, the Indian thinkers have also found out that time, space and matter are not independent existences. If that were so, the Advaitic conception of non-dualistic God will not hold good, for there would be two independent absolute entities, *viz.*, 1. God and 2. time, space and matter, which is absurd. Matter, it has already been proved, has no existence separate from God. So also time and space. Time changes with every

change of our mind. In one moment of our dream experience, there passes sometimes before our mind, the incidents of a life-time, or when our mind is concentrated on some interesting study, we become quite oblivious of time, thereby showing that time entirely depends upon the state of our mind. We cannot have any idea of absolute or abstract time. Time is cognised only when we take two events, one preceding and the other succeeding, into consideration. So time can never be independent. Again take the case of space; we cannot have any idea of space without taking two limits, or conceiving it as between three objects. So space too is not absolute. And all these three—time, space and matter—are interdependent. We cannot conceive of any one of them by itself. They have no existence independent of God. Here also there is a wide measure of agreement between the Western and the Indian view, but the Western thinker posits a "neutral stuff" instead of God, from which time, space and matter have no independent existence. Gaudapada, the preceptor of Sankara's teacher, establishes in his *Mandukya Karika* by means of unaided reason that the world of time, space and matter has no existence by itself. It is all imagination of the Mind, pure and simple, and is caused by Maya inherent in the luminous Atman (*vide Mandukya Karika Chapter II on 'Illusion'*).

### III

#### CREATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

This material universe, it is assumed by modern Western thinkers, must have been at one time in a highly organised state, but has subsequently been tending towards disorganisation.

And because a less organised universe could not have evolved into a more organised, it is believed that this universe was suddenly ushered into existence or created at some definite moment, and since then it is steadily running down. The American Physicist Robert Andrews Millikan says: "The material universe has contained in itself, and perhaps still contains, some mysterious impulse for its energy to run upwards. This impulse is veiled from our observation, so far as concerns its general operation. But there must have been an epoch in which the dominant trend was the formation of electrons and protons, molecules and stars. To-day, so far as our observation goes, they are decaying. . . . . However vast may be the scale of the physical order, it appears to be finite, and it is wasting at a finite rate. However long the periods of time may have been, there must have been a beginning of the mere waste, and there must have an end to it." According to the First Law of Thermodynamics the amount of energy in the universe remains the same at all times. It can change its form without any loss in the process. Energy cannot either be created or destroyed. This law is also known as the Conservation of Mass or Energy. Life on earth being dependent on energy, it was thought to be eternal and going on for ever because of the indestructibility of energy. But the Second Law of Thermodynamics, also called Entropy, changed the whole situation. Energy is no longer indestructible, but it passes into a state of equilibrium when it is no more available as a going concern. Such energy is merely uniformly distributed in space. Scientists are said to have discovered that this is happen-

ing in the universe constantly, and a time may come when all the existing energy will go to a state of equilibrium and there will be no interchange of energy. Life on earth exists because of this interchange of energy, and when this is absent life must stop with it. So the scientists say that the universe is running down, that is to say, it is heading towards destruction or Pralaya as it is called in Sanskrit. Mathematical calculation shows that the constituent matter of the present universe cannot exist longer than 200 million million years. Then there would be no more atoms left capable of dissolving into radiation. There would be neither sunlight nor starlight, but only a cool glow of radiation uniformly diffused through space.

As against this modern view that this universe was suddenly ushered into existence at some definite moment, and since then is running down, the Indian philosophers have a parallel thought, *viz.*, that of the creation, projection and dissolution of the universe—Srishti and Pralaya. In the beginning everything in the universe is in a state of equilibrium or perfect balance. This is the Pralaya State. All creation is stopped as it were for a period. After some time, again, the ball sets rolling. The very

nature of Akasa is vibration. When it vibrates, its evolution begins. This is what is called Srishti or projection. All motion in this universe is likened to waves undergoing successive rise and fall. Rise means creation and fall is Pralaya. This rising and falling is going on eternally. Some philosophers hold that the whole universe goes to this state of Pralaya or dissolution for a time, only to project itself again ; others say that this process of quieting down applies only to systems. There are millions of such systems in this universe ; when one of the systems quiets down and goes back to its undifferentiated state, other systems project outwards. What the modern scientists speak of as the running down of the universe may be applicable to one such system ; but in any case, it cannot remain in that state of cool glow of radiation or equilibrium for ever. A time will come, according to the Indian thinkers, when the equilibrium will be disturbed and the same energy, which was lying in a quiescent state, will be available again for another creation. The mysterious power of Maya is at the root of all creation and the Akasa cannot for ever remain in a quiescent state due to that power.

*(To be continued)*

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# MEDITATIONS: CONQUEST OF EGOISM

*By Anilbaran Ray*

[Sj. Anilbaran Ray of Sri Aurobindo Asram, Pondicherry gives herein an idea of what true self-surrender consists in and what it can achieve.]

**I**T is curious how egoism mixes up with our surrender even when it is apparently honest and sincere. At one time we bow with our heart and soul to the Divine, at other times we follow our own way. Even at the same time some part in us surrenders while other parts hold back. The test is the lack of peace and equanimity, for where there is real surrender, there these things cannot exist.

We depend on the Divine but also count upon our own powers ; as the saying goes, we trust in God, but keep our powder dry. As if our surrender is to get as much as possible from the Divine and use it for our own purpose in our own way. It is this want of sincerity and completeness in our surrender which is a great obstacle to the working of the Divine power in us.

Let this falsehood and duplicity completely disappear from me, Mother. Let me be free from all egoism, all initiative, all desire ; let me turn always towards Thee and let this earnest prayer ceaselessly rise up from my soul :

Descend into me, Mother, in all Thy divine glory ; seize my mind and fill it with Thy light ; seize my will and make it an instrument of Thy divine will ; seize my whole being and make it a perfect vehicle of the great joy of divine love.

\* \* \*

We really lose nothing by losing our egoistic personality in the one immutable Self of all existence.

Through the ego we ignorantly confine ourselves to a limited portion of the world ; by transcending the ego we go beyond this limitation and realise the whole world to be our own.

Then we have not to feel the pang of separation from our near and dear ones, because we find them within our own self, and all beings in the world become equally near and dear to us. We cease to be troubled by ideas of obligation and duty as we realise that we are not the real doers, but it is Nature really which carries out all our works. The joys and sorrows of the world do no longer affect us, as we perceive them to be passing movements in the universal play. Realising our true self to be infinite and perfect, we rise above all limited desires and attachments. By losing our ego we lose only our bondage and limitation.

Yet we do not cease to have individual personality. Through our individual nature we enter into a relation of love and devotion to the Divine Mother and find our nature to be a part of Herself, a vehicle of the manifestation of Her divine play which She is unfolding for the pleasure of Her Lord. By merging our lower self in the higher and identifying our individual nature with the Divine Mother, we grow into our real divine personality.

\* \* \*

There is no other way of getting out of the miseries of the egoistic

life, Mother, than by completely identifying myself with Thee.

As long as the ego is the centre of our life, we ceaselessly move round and round it, bound by our ignorant attachments, impelled by our blind desires. No real progress, no transformation is at all possible under these conditions of darkness and falsehood. But all the limitations and imperfections of the lower life are at once ended when we are able to merge ourselves completely in Thee, Mother.

Then Thou becomest the centre of our life, instead of the ego ; Thy will takes the place of our desires ; Thy truth replaces the limited light of our reason ; and all our sensuous hankerings and egoistic cravings are merg-

ed in the great delight of an intimate touch and integral union with Thee. And this is the real truth of our life. We are made out of Thy stuff, we are a spark out of Thy fire ; all separation from Thee is falsehood and is the real source of misery.

So let me grow more and more identified with Thee, Mother, let all independent movements, all separate existence altogether cease in me. As the river falling into the sea at once transcends its limitations and becomes great and infinite with the sea itself, so let my human life fall into Thee, Mother, and become great and glorious in Thy divine life and divine consciousness.

## THE NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS (OR NARADA'S APHORISMS ON DIVINE LOVE)

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

[The name of sage Narada is familiar to every Hindu. He is both a knower and a lover of God—a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* in one. His aphorisms on Divine Love form one of the most inspiring chapters in India's religious literature.]

### SUTRAS 8 to 12.

In the last Sutra, Narada has shown how Para Bhakti is intimately associated with renunciation. It is likely that people may misunderstand that renunciation means a complete abandonment of all activities. So in the next seven Sutras, Narada seeks to show that there is no ground for such misunderstanding. He points out that there is no inherent opposition between renunciation and service.

निरोधस्तु लोके वेदव्यापारस्य न्यासः ॥ ८ ॥

निरोधः Renunciation (referred to in the previous Sutra as an invariable characteristic of Para

Bhakti) तु but लोके वेदव्यापारस्य of activities sacred as well as secular न्यासः consecration (भवति) is.

8. But<sup>1</sup> this renunciation (which is referred to in the last Sutra as an invariable characteristic of Para Bhakti) is only a consecration<sup>2</sup> of all activities, sacred and secular<sup>3</sup>.

*Notes.* 1. *But*—This is meant to point out that the Sutra is an answer to a doubt or objection that might probably be raised.

2. *Consecration*—To the realised man, the whole world is nothing but

his Beloved, viz., God. All his activities, therefore, are sublimated into worship. The difference between his activities and those of an unenlightened man is that while the former is absolutely selfless and unattached, the latter is selfish and attached to the results of his actions and consequently suffers. What is renounced by the Bhakta is not external activities but the ego. Cf. Gita V:13 and XVIII:56, 57, where Bhagavan says specifically that renunciation is mental. Cf. also Sankara's prayer in his Manasa Puja "Whatever work I do, they are all worship of Thyself."

3. *Sacred and Secular*—To the realised man, there is no distinction between sacred and secular. Every work is sacred to him inasmuch as it is an expression of his love for God. On the other hand, however much an unenlightened man may try to distinguish between the two, his actions cannot be really sacred inasmuch as the basis of such actions is his own ego.

तस्मिन् अनन्यता तद्विरोधिषूदासीनता च ॥ १ ॥

तस्मिन् in that अनन्यता complete unification or identification तद्विरोधिषु towards those which are opposed to it उदासीनता indifference च and.

9. In such renunciation by consecration, there is complete unification<sup>1</sup>, and indifference<sup>2</sup> towards everything opposed to it.

*Notes.* 1. *Unification*—In the realised man the primary instincts common to all members of the human race are all organised into the sentiment of love of God. They are not destroyed completely but they give up their distinctive natural characteris-

tics and modes of reaction, and merge themselves in Divine love and are completely unified into one. They are merely sublimated, and remain as suppliers of energy necessary for service and worship in which the love of God expresses itself.

There is unification in another sense also. The realised man does not have any interest of his own. He completely identifies himself with the woes and miseries of the world, and in his sympathy for its sufferings, completely forgets himself in its service. There is also unification in a still higher sense, in so far as the ego of such a person becomes identified with God, and his will, with God's will.

2. *Indifference*.—Though the instincts thus remain, they do not react even in the presence of their natural stimuli, as such reaction cannot co-exist with the predominant sentiment of Love to which they are opposed. But they do react when such reaction is helpful for the expression of Divine love.

अन्याश्रयानां त्यागः अनन्यता ॥ १० ॥

अन्याश्रयानां of all other supports त्यागः abandonment अनन्यता unification.

10. Unification means the abandonment of all other support.

*Notes.* This emphasises how in a realised man sublimation is effected by the withdrawal of the instincts from their natural field of action and the redirection of their energies towards the Self of all selves, which is the support of all. Formerly the ego used to be the support of all instinctive reactions, and such reactions required also the presence of particular stimuli. But in the state of realisa-

tion, both these supports are absent. Hence the very conditions necessary for their natural expression do not exist. But even though these do not exist, they have got a better support in the Self of all selves, namely, God.

लोकवेदेषु तदनुकूलावरणं तद्विरोधिषु

उदासीनता ॥ ११ ॥

लोकवेदेषु among the activities sacred and secular तदनुकूलावरणं doing only such as are favourable to it तद्विरोधिषु towards those which are opposed to it उदासीनता indifference.

11. Indifference to factors hostile to devotion means performance of such secular and sacred activities as are favourable to devotion.

*Notes.*—Narada maintains here that love of God never ends in inactivity and idleness. A true devotee will dislike only such works as are hostile to the cultivation of Love, but with the energy thus saved by the abandonment of undesirable works, he would perform others that are favourable to devotion with redoubled vigour. This latter kind of works may range from pious duties like worship and prayer to actions of world-wide significance performed with the spirit of dedication inculcated by the Gita.

भवतु निश्चयदाढ्यादूर्ध्वं शास्त्ररक्षणम् ॥ १२ ॥

निश्चयदाढ्यादूर्ध्वं (अपि) even after realisation becomes well established शास्त्ररक्षणं protection of the Scriptures भवतु let there be.

12. Let a man protect<sup>1</sup> the Scriptures even after his spiritual realisation becomes well established.

*Notes.* 1. *Protect*—Scriptures of mankind are nothing but the records of the spiritual realisations of Rishis, sages and saints ; we see many of the Scriptures woefully neglected not only by the masses but even by the educated and so-called religious people. They have practically become dead. The reason for this is that the experiences recorded therein have become meaningless to the later generations. The truths preached by the ancient sages must be felt to be useful to us at the present time also. This can be achieved only if persons living even at present, whom we venerate as realised persons, follow the scriptures in their actual life. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita III:21, the masses are always led to follow in the footsteps of those whom they look up to as leaders. The truths of the Scriptures must be re-lived before our people's eyes, and their usefulness demonstrated publicly, before the ordinary man adopts them as a guidance for his own life. If, therefore, realised men do not follow the Scriptures, then woe unto the Scriptures ! Thus Scriptures need the protection of the realised persons, as otherwise they are liable to be neglected or misinterpreted.

Again every old text is not a Sastra. What may have been useful in the past may cease to be so in course of time under other circumstances and surroundings. Progress in culture and civilisation also necessitates many readjustments in the Scriptures. Every age must, therefore, have its own realised men who can test the Scriptures in the light of their own spiritual experiences. Only such rules and texts deserve to live as can stand such repeated tests. Only the realised men can find out what is of real value in

the Scriptures and bring out the grain from the chaff. Hence realised men are to protect the Sastras, also in the

sense of making them understandable to people capable of being applied in their lives.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**A Hermit in the Himalayas :** By Paul Brunton. Published by B. G. Paul & Co., 12, Francis Joseph St., Madras. Pp. 322.

The 'hermit' referred to in the title of the book is none other than the author, Mr. Brunton, himself. Although his self-chosen title of 'hermit' may puzzle many a reader at first, his doubts will be clarified as he goes through the book, and reads Mr. Brunton assuring that a hermit does not necessarily mean one who starves himself, tortures his body, puts on insufficient clothing, lives only in caves, shuns society, and also observes celibacy, but one who possesses a particular attitude of mind. As to what that attitude is, the reader will have ample opportunity to know as he turns over the pages of the book.

The subject-matter of the book is the experiences of Mr. Brunton during his stay in the Himalayas in the Tehri-Garhwal State. The book is therefore purely autobiographical, and will be of interest mainly to those who are interested in Mr. Brunton. Besides the narration of purely personal matters, the reader will, however, come across reflections on a variety of topics of general interest. To mention some of these, there are reflections on British rule in India and political strife, spiritualising politics, concentration, remembrance of former births, Nature's purpose with mankind, Himalayan pilgrimages, the future of Tibet, Sir Francis Younghusband's experiences, Jesus and his critics, why Mr. Charles Chaplin should become a hermit and retire to the Himalayas with Mr. Brunton, some truths about sex and its relation to Yoga, the problem of Nature's cruelty, astrology, delights of tea-drinking and many more topics of like nature. The literary merits of these reflections are of a high order, and they provide delightful reading for lighter moments; but the quality of thought contained in them is not correspondingly high

superficiality being their striking feature in this respect.

Of all these reflections, we wish to draw the reader's attention to two. One is the way Mr. Brunton disposes of the question of sex in spiritual life. There are two types of men, Mr. Brunton says, and of these, one may adhere to strict celibacy if they have preference for it. Mr. Brunton has no objection to it, nay, he is even full of reverence for people of this kind if they are genuine. But he would not have them insist on the other type accepting their discipline; for, according to him, there is no necessary connection between uncompromising celibacy and spiritual attainments. And why? Because, "It is not the fiat of the Deity that all shall torture themselves by unsuccessful efforts to drive off the besetting attentions of what is, after all, a purely natural function..... The truth is that it is not the disuse or use of the sexual organ which points the way to salvation any more than it is the disuse or use of the digestive organ, or the vocal organ..... (Italics ours). It does not concern the body so much as it concerns the inhabitant of the body—the soul. We shall find it not through fussing about our physical organs but through conquering that which ultimately rules them—the mind." We shall not enter here into any discussion or criticism of this view, but only leave the reader to ponder over two questions: 'Is the relation of sex to spiritual life, especially in its higher developments, only like that of digestion and speech?' and 'Is it possible to discipline the mind without taking the body also into consideration?'

The question of celibacy, however, affects only the life of a few, but the other reflection of Mr. Brunton is of more pressing importance in the life of a large section of humanity. And that is his views on Tibet. Mr. Brunton wanted to visit the



Mt. Kailas, but the Tibetan Government would not raise the general ban against the entry of Europeans into that country, even in the case of a hermit like Mr. Brunton. Mr. Brunton therefore warns the Tibetans, especially the Lamas, that this prejudice against the Europeans, born of a narrow religious outlook and the desire to hold down the people in their grip, would not save them in the long run. For Tibet has gold, and Tibetans do not know how to extract it. The dog-in-the-manger policy on the part of the Lamas cannot help them hold the European at an arm's length for all time from that rich reserve of precious metal. In the past it was difficult for the European to penetrate into Tibet by force, on account of the natural difficulties of communication; but to-day the development of aerial warfare and traffic has altered the whole situation. Look at Abyssinia. The Italian was not a welcome guest there, but her like or dislike did not ultimately debar Italy from conquering her. Mr. Brunton, therefore, advises Tibetans that, if they want to avert this calamity, they should open their country, if not to all Europeans, at least to such of them as are well-intentioned and would help Tibetans in exploiting their natural resources in a way that would be profitable to themselves as well as the world at large. A sound piece of advice, indeed! But unfortunately there is no chance of Mr. Brunton's book being read in Tibet, and of the Lamas taking advantage of this suggestion before it is too late. There are, however, men in Mr. Brunton's part of the world, and as for the matter of that, in the East, too, especially in Japan, who may not desist from the expenditure of the required tons of bombs and poison gas, if they seriously take the information conveyed by Mr. Brunton regarding the existence of gold in Tibet. But this will take time; if, in the meantime, the Lamas become suddenly intelligent and profit by Mr. Brunton's wise counsel, it would benefit not only well-intentioned gold-diggers, but also pious hermits of the West like Mr. Brunton himself, who intend to visit Mount Kailas.

In conclusion we must say a word in praise of the very readable, effective and lively journalistic style in which Mr. Brunton writes, and above all, of the vivid

and charming descriptions of Himalayan sceneries scattered all through the book. This last point is perhaps the most attractive feature of the book, and those who have not witnessed the sublime grandeur of the Himalayan regions, can get a peep into it through the pen-pictures of Mr. Brunton.

(1) *In Secret Tibet*, (2) *Darkness over Tibet*: By Theodore Illions. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pp. 190 & 192. Price sh. 5 and sh. 6 respectively.

In the foregoing review we have seen how Mr. Paul Brunton was disappointed because the peculiar prejudice of Tibetans against Westerners made it impossible for him to go to Mount Kailas situated in Tibetan territory. Here are recorded in these two books the wonderful experiences of another Englishman, Mr. Theodore Illions, who could do what Mr. Brunton could not in spite of being a 'hermit', namely, to travel extensively through Tibet and mix with all ranks of society there. One may be tempted to question whether it is all true or only a clever concoction for producing a good seller; but Mr. Illions and his publishers assure us that everything said therein is 'absolutely true.' We have to leave it there.

It cannot, however, be disputed that Mr. Illions' book is very interesting to read. For one thing, Mr. Illions makes no attempt to scandalise the oriental and to spice his literary dish with the sexual orgies and abnormalities of the holy men of the East in order to cater to the tastes of the matter-of-fact men of the West. For this at least we must be thankful to him. On reading it, one gains the impression that Tibetans are lovely people, though they are a bit too dirty and have a special like for putrified meat. But with all their physical dirt and squalor, their heart is much more beautiful than that of civilised men. Tibetan peasants and nomads are endowed with all primitive virtues—they are kind, hospitable, and simple-minded. A terrible fear of ghosts and abject submission to the Lamas form their crying vice. The Tibetan brigands, who are separated from non-brigands only by a very thin line, are also excellent people. They never kill people, nor deprive a traveller of all his

food; they are curious like children and meddle with all the belongings of their victims, but take away only what is useful to them. The rich men of Tibet, like rich men everywhere, put on airs; but they are perhaps more free from superstition than the masses and have the penetration to see through the deceptions of Lamaism. They would not, however, expose it, as it is to their interest also that the masses are kept superstitious and ignorant.

The real villain of the books is the Lama. Not that Lamas are horribly lecherous or diabolical. In fact, Mr. Illions, from his experience in many monasteries, discredits as mythical the stories of Western girls living infatuated with the Lamas in their monasteries. The Lamas are very strict in avoiding association with women, though, Mr. Illions tells us, he found among them some traces of unnatural perversions. The real trouble with the Lamas is that they have made a business of religion, and use all their civil and ecclesiastical powers to keep the common man of Tibet in abject superstition and ignorance, exploiting his simple and credulous nature for their own aggrandisement.

If the Lama is the devil, the Tibetan hermit constitutes the god of Mr. Illions' books. These men, we are told, do not generally live in monasteries and are not to be found among the Lamas, though occasionally some such may be found among them too, as for example, when Mr. Illions happened to be saved from the hands of some suspicious Lamas by the providential appearance of one of these angels. The hermits generally live in solitude, have a child-like and benign appearance, can understand other people's thought without any effort, are full of wisdom and universal disinterested love for all beings, are absolutely free from all vanity, including the vanity of saintliness, have no prejudice against Westerners, are possessed of super-human powers which they never use for selfish purposes, and are credited to be living much beyond the ordinary man's span of life. And one of them told Mr. Illions the secret of their long life and youthfulness: "The moment you make an effort to remain young, you get old. *The very moment you make an effort to keep something, you are afraid to*

*lose it. And fear poisons man . . . . It is fear that destroys people's youth. . . . And what is youth? It is freedom from prejudice, freedom from habitual ways of thinking and habitual ways of living. So long as we are spontaneous, loving and enthusiastic we are young."* Not only are these angels wise in matters of the spirit, but are even posted with up-to-date information on world conditions, though they have no news papers and no communication with other countries. One of them discussed with Mr. Illions the present-day condition of Western civilisation, the unemployment problem, and other questions of the same type. He was also for introducing some of the Western mechanical devices into Tibet.

Apart from these accounts of different types of people in Tibet, one comes across also descriptions of several miraculous phenomena like discarnate voices, flying Lamas, and the underground city.

The curious reader may, however, like to know how Mr. Illions overcame the greatest difficulty for a Westerner in travelling in Tibet, namely, that of being unrecognised as a European. Every one may be quite prepared to know that Mr. Illions' body was covered with a cloak, but how could he hide from the Tibetan his defective Tibetan speech with European accent, his long nose, his blue eyes, and his white face? Here it is that Mr. Illions shows his greatest resourcefulness, and if Mr. Paul Brunton really intends going to Tibet, he ought to receive a course of instruction from him in these matters. Mr. Illions overcame these difficulties in the following way: He talked only when in the company of ignorant Tibetans, but pretended to be deaf and dumb when he was in towns or among Lamas. He gave a Tibetan appearance to his nose by applying a plug. As for his eyes, he always kept them half closed. And as for the colour of his face and hands, he dyed those parts with a mixture of 'iodine and oil'! And where did he keep his bottle containing this precious mixture? Here comes the climax: "Had this bottle been found by brigands searching me it would have meant the untimely end of the Tibetan adventure. However, the precious bottle was tucked away so securely that on one occasion the bandits who found even my camera which was not larger than a match-

box, failed to find the bottle. *As the secret of its hiding-place might still be useful to me some day, I wish to hold it back, but*

*I would like to add that its real efficacy rested on its extraordinary simplicity."* (Italics ours.) But that's suspicious!

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture was inaugurated on Saturday morning by Swami Virajananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

After prayers Prof. Binoy Kumar Sarkar described the aims and objects of the Institute. He said *inter alia* : "It will have for its objects the teachings of that great seer of modern India through the study and promotion of the creative achievements and spiritual experiences of the diverse races, castes, classes and communities of mankind on a scientific, comparative and cosmopolitan basis.

"The importance of such a cultural Institute can hardly be over emphasized in an age when the materialistic outlook on life has blinded human vision to the inner harmony and beauty of our collective existence and has thereby created an atmosphere of mutual distrust, hatred and discord throughout the world. The significant advent of Sri Ramakrishna into the arena of Indian life at this psychological moment and his unique spiritual contribution to the sum total of human thought cannot therefore be better symbolized than by the inauguration of such a cultural institute where the representatives of the East and the West can meet on terms of equality and mutual respect, and work with a consecrated zeal to bring about a complete change in the outlook of men. The philosophies, religions, moralities, arts and crafts,

sciences, literatures, industries, economic developments, measures for the control of poverty, health and educational organisations, etc., of the four quarters of the globe will form the theme of appreciative and rational discussion under the auspices of this Institute.

"In the light of the spiritual realisation of the fundamental unity of mankind and of all faiths—the eternal theme of Indian life as embodied in the living gospel of Sri Ramakrishna—the Institute will attempt in its humble way to supply the cultural and spiritual foundations of a new personality among the men and women of the world and equip them as proper and adequate instruments for the establishment of world-peace, genuine internationalism and a really humane culture on earth.

"Along-side of the main section, the Institute intends to run another section devoted exclusively to the younger generation. Proper arrangements will be made to provide facilities for the youths to get an all-round training of their body, mind and spirit under the guidance of efficient instructors, thus laying the foundation for a healthy growth and development of our social organism."

The first discourse on "The Future of Religion" under the auspices of the newly started Institute was given by Swami Pavitrananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, on Saturday the 12th February at 5-30 p.m., at the Albert Hall (2nd floor).



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## HINDU ETHICS

न चारित्रनिमित्तोऽस्याहङ्कारो देहपातनः । अभिन्नश्रुतचारित्रः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
अध्यात्मविधितत्त्वज्ञः क्षान्तः शक्तो जितेन्द्रियः । ऋजुश्च सत्यवादी च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
सुशीलः सुखसंवेशः सुभोजः स्वादरः शुचिः । सुवाक्यश्चाप्यनीर्यश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
कल्याणं कुरुते बाढं पापमस्मिन् न विद्यते । न प्रीयते परानर्थैः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
नार्थे धने वा कामे वा भूतपूर्वोऽस्य विग्रहः । दोषाश्चास्य समुच्छिन्नाः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
दृढभक्तिरनिन्यात्मा श्रुतवाननृशंसवान् । वीतसंमोहदोषश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
समाधिर्नास्य कामार्थे नात्मानं स्तौति कर्हिचित् । अनीर्षुर्दुःसंवादः तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
लोकस्य विविधं चित्तं प्रेक्षते चाप्यकुत्सयन् । अभेता परगुह्यानां तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
नास्यत्यागमं कं चित् स्वनयेनोपजीवति । अवन्ध्यकालो वश्यात्मा तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥  
कृतभ्रमः कृतप्रज्ञो न च द्रुतः समाधिना । नित्ययुक्तोऽप्रमत्तश्च तस्मात् सर्वत्र पूजितः ॥

Why the sage Narada is adored everywhere is evident from the following characterisation: The deadly pride of having a high character never entered his mind, although he possessed sacred learning and noble conduct to perfection. He was quite at home in the science of self-knowledge, and was habitually forbearing, controlled in the activities of the senses, straightforward, truthful in speech, good in conduct, conversation and deportment, habituated only to pure food, loving, clean of body and mind, and devoid of malice. It was certain he acted always well. He was sinless and never felt glad at others' woes. He never picked up quarrel with any one for the sake of gain or pleasure. He had no defects and his devotion to God was deep and firm. A taintless soul he was and his mastery of the scriptures was supreme. Pleasure was never his motive, and he was not given to boasting. Cruelty and delusion were utterly absent in him. He was jealous of none and communicated with great softness. Without a word of disparagement he used to observe the infinite ways in which the minds of men worked, and never divulged the secrets of other people. He was not regardless of other faiths, but lived according to his own. He wasted no moment and ever remained a master of himself. He was hard-working, and acquired vast wisdom. He had no satiety in devout contemplation. Constant application and great vigilance marked his life.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 238.

## THE PERSONAL AND THE IMPERSONAL

[In the following paragraphs we have discussed some of the philosophical implications of these two doctrines regarding the Deity, and have indicated the lines along which Vedantic thought seeks to reconcile them.]

### I

**T**HE most remarkable contribution that the Hindu mind has made to the spiritual heritage of mankind is in regard to the conception of the Deity. The human mind works along two lines in the contemplation of the Divine. In the first place it wants to commune with Him, to grasp Him and possess Him like any other thing. It feels unsatisfied unless the Deity is human—of course infinitely more magnified than any man and without any human imperfection—and unless He can be thought of as the cause of the universe and as entering into intimate relationship with man as the determiner of his destiny. And this is quite natural. For man is led to think of God chiefly because the human longings of his heart demand fulfilment in an infinite human personality, or because the troubles and tribulations of life drive him to seek shelter in a power that can shield him from them, or because his intellect requires for its support a final cause of the vast universe in which he finds himself placed in so mysterious and unaccountable a fashion. All the conceptions of the Deity that the mind of man evolves in response to needs and questionings of this kind are identical in the sense that they can all be called 'personal'. By the term 'personal' we do not of course mean that the Deity, from this point of view, should necessarily be conceived as a gigantic man or as a despotic

king sitting on a throne surrounded by a host of underlings. Indeed, the Personal God may be thought of as with form or without form; but He is spoken of as personal not so much for this difference in conception, as for the fact that He is the answer that the human being gets in his quest, so long as he thinks himself to be a person and consequently seeks for an explanation of things, which must necessarily be in personal terms. For, whether our quest is for a God who heals the wounds of our heart, or gives rest to our intellect by taking the responsibility of creation; whether we think of him as endowed with a form of exquisite beauty, or merely as a power without a body but none-the-less possessing all the virtues of an exalted human being—the conception continues to be personal because it is still clothed in the garb of human values, it being the response we get to some of our felt needs in our emotional and intellectual life.

The personal conception of God, therefore, comes within the field of what is called anthropomorphism. The ancient scripture of the Hebrews said that God created man in His image, but modern scholars who have made a study of religion in all societies have reversed the saying, and shown that man has created God in his image. For the Vedantic philosophy based on a Personal-Impersonal God, it is however unimportant whether the higher ideas of God are developments

from the primitive notions regarding spirits or whether the primitive spirits are perversions of a once exalted conception of the Deity. Whatever the origin and history of the idea may be, the one fact that comes out prominently is, that the various conceptions of Personal God reflect the intellectual, moral and aesthetic attainments of the people who have developed the conceptions. The procession of Gods is a never-ending one, and we have got all grades and levels of them, from fighting and wine-drinking Gods who often espouse human brides, up to the conception of the one God of the universe who is endowed with the most sublime attributes that the human mind can think of and who forms the highest explanation of the universe that the human intellect could arrive at. Often, as the worshippers become more and more refined with the progress of culture, the old Gods become too low for them from the moral point of view, and then they either reject them in preference to higher conceptions, or they elevate the very same old Gods by giving allegorical interpretations of their questionable features and thus reconciling them to the current higher standards of society. All this belongs to the sphere of anthropomorphism, and the highest achievement of man in this sphere is reached when he has arrived at the conception of a God of the universe who saves him from the tribulations of life and guides the destinies of this universe. This God of the universe may be thought of as with form or as without it; in either case it belongs to the highest limits in the sphere of anthropomorphism.

All these various ideas, from the crudest to the highest, deserve to be

brought under the conception of Personal God, because they are all alike sprung from man's attempt to grasp the Deity while himself remaining a man in full possession of his ego—in other words, from his attempt to establish a point of contact between his limited self and the Supreme by capturing Him in the net of his own human needs, intellectual and emotional.

## II

We have stated before that the human mind works along two lines in the contemplation of the Deity, and of these, we have till now dealt with what goes ordinarily under the name of the personal conception of God. The essence of it, we saw, is that the consciousness of the world and the sense of his own ego are the most dominant experiences moulding man's conception of the Deity. But side by side with it, the human mind feels a lurking suspicion whether a God in human terms is not in Himself a limited being, however much the heart may need Him for satisfaction, and however much the intellect may require Him as a resting place. The cosmos may be unthinkable vast in dimensions, and the One who is its creator and sustainer may be endowed with powers so great that it stupifies the imaginations of poor human beings like us, even as the power and majesty of the ruler of a mighty empire overawes an ignorant peasant. But is not the conception of Him yet that of a limited being, depending as it does on the experience of the universe and of our own individual ego? If our God is only the creator of the universe and the saviour of man, then our very conception of His existence is dependent

on these two factors of experience, namely, the universe and our individual problem of life. And a Personal God, by the very genesis of that conception, is, as we have seen, a relational being, and unless we can know Him, at least in some other relation than that of the creator and the saviour, we cannot even take His absolute existence for granted. To make the matter more clear, even in our common experience of the things of the world, we find that all things having real existence, a self-identity apart from other things, can exist in more than one relation. A fruit, an existent thing, can, for example be perceived in relation to the tree, to the ground, to a table, to a basket, to a plate, and so on and so forth. When we thus perceive, or understand the possibility of perceiving, it in different contexts, we are convinced that it has an existence of its own, relative it might be, apart from these relations. But take the case of a rainbow. It is seen only when sunlight and clouds conspire together to bring it into existence, and we can never separate it from this one relation. We therefore conclude that it has no identity or self-existence of its own apart from the particular conditions in which it appears. Now if our God is only the creator and saviour, in other words, if He is known only in reference to the universe and the human standpoint it implies, we cannot be sure of the absolute self-existence of God; for He may be, like the rainbow, merely a concept dependent on our experience of the universe. To be sure of His existence, we must, therefore, have an assurance of his complete independence from the world and our own individuality.

As against this it may be said that the conception of God as creator in itself carries with it the implication of His existence apart from the creation, just as that of the potter from the pot. But there is, however, a difference in the conceptions which makes the analogy inappropriate. We see the potter independently existing and making the pot, but no one has seen God creating the universe. In fact we infer the existence of God—if such inference is legitimate at all—from our experience of the universe and our individuality which forms a part of it, and as long as we know Him only as creator, that is, in contrast to the universe and our individuality, the doubt is bound to persist that His existence is bound up with that of the universe. Hence, when we say that God as creator implies His self-existence, we are only assuming that He exists independent of the universe and our individuality. In that case we are taking the concept of the creator as a self-transcendent conception, admitting its inadequacy if it is bound up with the world. Now this is in no way different from the point we have been urging.

Now the Impersonal God, of whom the Vedanta speaks, is this assurance of the self-existence of God, which a merely anthropomorphic conception of Him cannot convey, however exalted it might be. In other words, as long as we do not grant that God is, even in the absence of the universe and our individualities, our Personal God is in danger of being merely the projection of our desires—an image of man's hopes and fears. Now the philosophy of God as the Impersonal, unrelated to the universe and unconnected with our destinies,

and ending finally in complete acosmism, is the only sound and substantial basis for a conception of Personal God to stand upon. It is not hereby meant to say that we are to derive the Personal God, the universe and so on as entities successively born of an unrelated and Impersonal Absolute; for that goes against the very idea of an unrelated, Impersonal Absolute. What the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute warrants is this: in the spiritual quest of man, when the highest level of anthropomorphism is reached in a creator and saviour God, there is felt a natural tendency to transcend that very idea in the experience of an impersonal type, that is, an experience in which the question of individual destiny or of the origin and explanation of the universe does not arise at all. In other words, the Impersonal Absolute is the self-transcendence of the Personal God, without taking which into consideration the ontological question regarding the existence of the Personal God is not finally set at rest.

### III

If the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute is viewed in this light, much of the abhorrence which pure theists feel against it can be remedied. The reason for this hostility of theists and dualists is to be attributed largely to a faulty way of presenting this philosophy, in addition to their own narrowness and theological prejudices. Many an exponent of the doctrine of the Impersonal Absolute maintains that the doctrine implies a negation of all attributes and, along with it, necessarily of all the highest values and the Personal Deity who is the conservator of them all in the light of

the most refined anthropomorphic conception. This way of procedure, it would seem, is both wrong philosophy and faulty religion. The distinction between attribute and substance is a philosophical fiction unwarranted by experience. In the first place, we can think only of the removal of one set of attributes from another set of attributes, not of all attributes from a so-called substance. If at all we arrive at anything this way, we arrive at only a non-entity, which surely is not the Impersonal Absolute. From the practical point of view, it is impossible for any sober man to think that, by merely imagining in his mind, he can rid all experienced things of their attributes. What in fact he can do is to refine his ego and discover its secret. When this is successfully done, a stage comes when thought takes a leap from its conditioned state, shedding thereby its anthropomorphic slough and gaining thereby a non-individual view of experience which is devoid of the distinction between the seer, the seen and the relation between them characteristic of knowledge at the individual level. It is illegitimate for a logician to come forward and interpret this as denuding things of their attributes or of experience of all value. If language can express it at all, it can be spoken of neither as affirming nor as denying attribute and value, but only as transcending them in the sense that the bursting of the shell of anthropomorphism and individuality reveals them in a new non-objective and impersonal light. It is not a denial of attribute and value, but a transcendence of the conflict between substance and attribute, between fact and value.

Another misinterpretation of the philosophy of the Impersonal Abso-



lute is to represent it as teaching that the Personal God is a lower God, and thereby reducing His worshippers to mere idolaters. There can perhaps be no caricature of a great doctrine worse than this. Even its logic is defective. Comparison is a way of relating things and when we speak of the Impersonal Absolute as higher than something else, we are putting it in the scale of relations and reducing it again into an anthropomorphic entity. What is worse, this anthropomorphised Absolute entity of the relational scheme is reduced to something lesser than personality, that is, by such comparison the Absolute becomes at best an undifferentiated inertness or a shadowy negation, and the theistic theologians are right in abhorring such a conception and refuting it with all the power of their logic. God, as the great Christian thinker, Anselm put it, is the highest being we can think of ; the very constitution of the mind dictates this. And as we have shown, anthropomorphism being the very texture of human thought, this highest object it can think of is only the Personal God. To call Him a lower God is therefore as illogical as it is to describe the Impersonal Absolute as the higher God by bringing Him into the relational scheme. If He is thus only a lower being, He ceases to be God and an object worthy of worship. For worship is due only to God, the highest of beings; to offer it to any lesser being is idolatry and a prostitution of the highest faculty of man. Sometimes people wonder why many a theistic thinker has violently opposed the philosophy of the Impersonal Absolute. This attitude of theists is generally ascribed to fanaticism and narrowness, and there may be some

truth in this. It is, however, to be attributed more to this slur that some champions of the Impersonal Absolute in their zeal cast on the Personal God and His worship, and to the illogical and odious comparisons they indulge in between the Personal and the Impersonal.

#### IV.

What then is the proper attitude in regard to this question? The problem may be approached from two points of view—that of the mind that has realised the Impersonal Absolute, and that of one who is in some level or other of anthropomorphism. To a mind that has realised the Impersonal Absolute, there cannot possibly occur the idea of comparing the Personal with the Impersonal. For, comparison and evaluation are possible only when there is individuality. But in the state of realisation of the Impersonal, there is no longer any individuality. For what realises the Impersonal is the Impersonal Himself, not the individual. In Sri Ramakrishna's words, it is Brahman alone that realises Brahman, not the Jiva. And where there is no Jivahood or individuality, the question of comparison between the relative merits of the Personal and the Impersonal does not arise at all.

From the other point of view, namely, the anthropomorphic, the Personal God is the highest that can be thought of, and there can therefore be no question of a higher being than Him. The human mind can therefore think of the Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute not as a lower God and a higher God, but as two aspects of one and the same Being. Between a man in His office dress and the same

person in His home dress, there is no question of superiority or inferiority involved. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, the distinction between Brahman and Sakti, that is, between the Impersonal Absolute and Personal God, is a distinction without a difference, even as that between milk and its whiteness, a gem and its brightness, or a snake and its zig zag motion. "When the Supreme Being is thought of as actionless—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying—I call him by the name of Brahman or Purusha (Impersonal Absolute)," says he, "but when I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying, etc—I call Him by the name of Sakti or Maya, or Prakriti (Impersonal Absolute)." Thus a worshipper of Personal God should understand that the doctrine of the Impersonal does not in any way contradict or disparage the Personal. It is, as we have

shown, only an assertion that God is independent of the world and our individualities—that there is a state of experience which reveals Him as the sole being without any reference to Jagat (creation) and the Jivas (individual experiencers). In place of weakening the position of the theists, such a doctrine only gives a greater assurance, a better ontological certainty, regarding the conception of Personal God, and as such it deserves to be welcomed by all true devotees.

To put it briefly, the doctrine of the Impersonal Absolute does not imply a negation of Personal God nor a dethronement of Him into the position of a lower Deity. It only emphasises the existence of God apart from His creation, and the possibility of an acosmic experience of Him which comes when the anthropomorphic outlook changes and individuality becomes merged in impersonality.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Devotee*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, known also as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of everyday life. We are indebted to Swami Nikhilananda, the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, for the English translation of the Bengali original.]

**T**HE Mother was engaged in a conversation with me in the morning.

Disciple: Mother, if there exists someone called God, why is there so much suffering and misery in the world? Does He not see it? Has He not the power to remove it?

Mother: The creation itself is full of misery and happiness. Could any one appreciate happiness if misery did not exist? Besides, how is it possible for all persons to be happy? Sita once said to Rama, "Why don't you remove the suffering and unhappiness of your subjects? Please make all

the inhabitants of your kingdom happy. If you only will, you can easily do it." Rama said, "Is it ever possible for all persons to be happy at the same time?" "Why not?" asked Sita, "please supply from the royal treasury the means of satisfying everyone's wants." "All right," said Rama, "your will shall be carried out." Rama sent for Lakshmana and said to him, "Go and notify everyone in my empire that whatever he wants he may get from the royal treasury." At this the subjects of Rama came to the palace and told their wants. The royal treasury began to flow without stint. When everyone was spending his days joyously, through the Maya of Rama the roof of the building in which Rama and Sita lived started to leak. Workmen were sent for, to repair the building. But where were they? There was not a labourer in the kingdom. In the absence of masons, carpenters, and artisans, all buildings went out of repair, and work was at a standstill. The subjects of Rama informed the king of their difficulties. Finding no other help, Sita said to Rama, "It is no longer possible to bear the discomfort of the leaking roof. Please arrange things as they were before. Then we shall be able to procure workmen. Now I realise that it is not possible for all persons to be happy at the same time." "Let it be so," said Rama. Instantaneously all things were as before and workmen could once more be procured. Sita said to Rama, "Lord, this creation is your wonderful sport."

No one can suffer for all time. No one will spend all his days on this earth in suffering. Every action brings its own result, and one gets one's opportunities accordingly.

Disciple : Is everything then due to Karma ?

Mother : If not, to what else ? Don't you see the scavenger carrying the tub on his head ?

Disciple : Where does one first get the propensity which leads him to an action, good or bad ? You may say, as an explanation of the propensities of *this* life, that they are due to the actions of the previous life and the propensities of that life to the preceding one. But where is the beginning ?

Mother : Nothing can happen without the will of God. Not even a straw can move. When a man passes into a favourable time, he gets the desire to contemplate God, but when the time is unfavourable he gets all the facilities for doing evil actions. Everything happens in time according to the will of God. It is God alone who expresses His will through the actions of man. Could Naren<sup>1</sup> by himself have accomplished all those things ? He was able to succeed because God worked through him. The Master has predetermined what He is going to accomplish. If anyone surrenders himself totally at His feet, then the Master will see that His purpose is accomplished. One must bear with everything because all our facilities are determined by actions. Again actions can be cancelled by actions.

Disciple : Can action ever cancel action ?

Mother : Why not ? If you do a good action, that will counteract your past evil action. Past sins can be offset by meditation, Japam, and spiritual thoughts.

I had heard that a boy in the Mirjapure Street was possessed by a ghost.

<sup>1</sup>Swami Vivekananda.

Some members of the Udbodhan Office had visited the boy on the previous day. I asked the Mother, "How long does one live in the spirit body?"

Mother : All people, excepting highly evolved souls, live in the spirit body for a year. After that, food and water are offered in Gaya for the satisfaction of the departed souls and religious festivals are arranged. By this means the souls of the departed are released from their spirit body and attain God ; or they may go to other planes of existence and experience pleasure or pain, and in the course of time, they are born again in human forms according to their desires. Others attain salvation from those planes. But if a person has some meritorious action to his credit in this life, he does not lose spiritual consciousness altogether in his spirit body.

Here the Mother again referred to the priest of the Govinda Temple in Brindavan.

Disciple : Is it possible for one to reach God if his Sraddha ceremony is performed in Gaya ?

Mother : Yes, that is true.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>In this connection I am reminded of another incident. The Holy Mother was in Benares. I had left a day or two before for Gaya to perform the Sraddha ceremony for my dead ancestors. I had said to the Holy Mother before my departure, "Mother, please give your blessings that my ancestors may attain heaven." On the very night of the day I offered food and drink in Gaya for the gratification of my departed ancestors, Bhudeb (Holy Mother's nephew who had accompanied her to Benares) saw the Holy Mother in a dream engaged in Japan with a crowd of people around her, saying, "Please give me salvation! Please give me salvation!" The Mother sprinkled them with the holy water kept in a jar and said, "Go away, you are saved." Then they departed in great happiness. Then another man appeared. The Mother

Disciple : Then what is the necessity of spiritual practices ?

Mother : These dead souls, no doubt, go to God and live there for sometime, but afterwards they are again born into the world according to their past desires. After their birth in a human body some of them obtain salvation in this life whereas others take inferior births to reap the results of their Karma. This world is moving around like a wheel. That is indeed the last birth, in which one gets completely rid of all desires.

Disciple : You just referred to the dead souls going to God. Do they go there by themselves or does someone lead them ?

Mother : No, they go by themselves. The subtle body is like a body made of air.

Disciple : What happens to those for whom no Sraddha ceremony is performed in Gaya ?

Mother : They live in the spirit body until some fortunate ones born in their family perform the Sraddha ceremony in Gaya, or some other obsequy.

Disciple : We hear of ghosts and spooks. Are they the attendants of Shiva or simply spirits ? Are they the spirits of dead people ?

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said to him, "I cannot continue like this any longer." He begged of her a long time and at last received her grace. The next day Bhudeb narrated this dream to the Holy Mother and she said in reply, "R—has gone to Gaya to perform the Sraddha ceremony of his ancestors. Therefore all these people have obtained their salvation." In fact, while offering oblations for my departed ancestors with great sincerity, I also offered food and drink for the salvation of all persons whose names I could remember at that time. I prayed for the salvation of all of them.

Mother : They are the spirits of the dead. The spirit-attendants of Shiva belong to a special group. One must live very carefully. Every action produces its result. It is not good to use harsh words towards others or be responsible for their suffering.

Disciple: Mother, a Neem tree does not produce a mango nor does a

mango tree produce Neem. Everyone reaps the result of his own Karma.

Mother : You are right, my child. In the final stage there is not even the idea of God. After attaining wisdom one sees that Gods and Deities are all Maya. Everything comes into existence in time and also disappears in time.

## VEDANTA WORK IN CENTRAL EUROPE

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[The following is a report by Swami Yatiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Order on the Vedanta work in Europe during 1933—1937. It is, however, more than a report and gives one an idea of how the spiritual principles of Indian culture are receiving appreciation in Europe. In his Presidential address at the last session of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Subhas Bose drew attention to the need of India establishing cultural contact with foreign countries. The present article will show how Ramakrishna Mission has been doing this work, though unrecognised by Indian politicians.]

**S**PIRITUAL yearning cannot be limited to any particular country or people. It is a universal phenomenon and is manifest more or less in all parts of the world in some form or other. In the midst of great economic and political unsettlement on the European continent, a large number of souls are longing for a new spiritual order and are eager to get the proper nourishment for appeasing their spiritual hunger.

More than four years back the sincere yearning of a section of such hungry souls found expression in a remarkable letter addressed to the Head of the Ramakrishna Order, as may be seen from the following extract :

"It is with the greatest hesitation that I am addressing myself to you. . . , requesting you to send us one of the Swamis of the Order to work with us and instruct us. I really cannot tell you how thankful we should be for

personal spiritual instructions, as life seems terribly worthless under the present circumstances . . . . We are getting older every day and never getting even nearer the real goal of life, that is, never growing to the full stature of a real human being.

"I do not know whether any one of us would be worthy to be blessed with the company of one of your Swamis, but I cannot tell your Holiness how thankful we should be for it. Theoretical knowledge can never bring the realisation of the Truth, and it is extremely difficult for ordinary people to find the right way alone, without the help of a living guide.

"I hope you will forgive me for this letter. It might so very easily seem arrogant, and I am afraid the only excuse I can offer you is the great admiration and love we have for your Holy Order and its Master.

"Besides, we see no other way of getting direct spiritual instruction as

we cannot go to India for lack of funds."

The ring of sincerity, expressed in this letter made a direct appeal to the hearts of the elders of the Order. And they deputed me to Europe in November 1933 and thus led to the inauguration of regular Vedanta work on the Continent.

#### VEDANTA BRINGING LIGHT

##### AND SOLACE TO MANY

During the last four years and more I am in Europe, I have come in close touch with many a liberal-minded and sincere seeker after Truth in Germany and Switzerland where I have spent most of my time, in Poland and France which too I visited on invitation, and also in Holland where I have come at the earnest request of some students of Vedanta.

In all the countries I have visited, there is an ever increasing number of persons, both inside and outside the institutional religions, who have become tired of religious dogmatism and have even revolted against the anthropomorphic conceptions of God and worship of personality. Many of these, who have been looking for new light, are responding to the universal message of the Vedanta. With their appeal both to reason and feeling at the same time, the teachings of Vedanta are satisfying the hopes and aspirations of many and are giving them a definite path of spiritual culture, which they are trying to follow in a systematic way. Some of these earnest souls are being strengthened in their faith in Vedanta as they are witnessing its transforming power and are even getting a clearer and clearer expression of the teachings in their practical life.

The following extracts from a few of the many letters received from highly educated and cultured devotees—both ladies and gentlemen—of different countries of Europe speak for themselves.

"We all want to express our thankfulness that we had the privilege of receiving the teachings of Vedanta.

"I know what a great blessing it is to come in touch with these highest ideas. I am so thankful to have now got a definite path to follow.

"I am so deeply grateful to have come in living touch with the spiritual movement of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, to have the opportunity of following the high ideas of Vedanta in a clear definite way. . . . Before, I was in such a nervous state full of restlessness and despair. I hated to live. Now, having known that the Divine Being dwells in me, I am coming to attain peace.

"There is, for the moment, a feeling of infinite peace, but I fear it will not be everlasting, and sooner or later there will be again a turmoil of feelings and ideas, and the equilibrium will be lost. But I feel that there must be a sort of 'trick' that would enable us to come consciously in contact with the 'Real I', so that the reality of that may never escape the mind. Then only will real peace be attained and I can laugh at all difficulties and illusions of ordinary life.

"During and after meditation I sometimes feel a great calmness, but then again I become so much conscious of my inefficiency that meditation in most cases ends in tears.

"Words are not enough to speak of the boon I received. I got a new, deeper, purer conception of life. I can see how poor I was without this

message. I now know what I have got to do in life.

"I try to do some meditation. I do not believe that I succeed, but I try to do it nevertheless. Then I pray to God to help me in getting better and to show me how I can do my everyday work as perfectly as possible.... The teachings have changed my whole outlook on life and I can never express how grateful I am.... Nothing can take me onward if it is not the teachings. They are the clearest and the most direct I ever heard of."

#### ABSTRACT OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS' REPORT

In my previous reports covering a little over two years beginning from November, 1933, up to the end of 1935, I spoke of my work at Wiesbaden (Germany) with different individuals and groups, of my visit to some of the university towns in Germany, and later on to Switzerland and Poland, where I was able to establish points of contact with some of the prominent Indologists and many other spiritually minded persons. I also mentioned therein my lectures and regular classes at St. Moritz and Geneva in Switzerland and also of my visit to Zurich in Switzerland, where I did some pioneering work, met some intellectuals and also came in contact with some seekers after Truth in different walks of life.

#### WORK IN 1936 AND 1937

*At Wiesbaden (Germany):* During the year 1936 I spent nearly three months—partly in winter and partly in summer—at Wiesbaden where I first came on invitation in November, 1933. I conducted intensive studies as before with new people and also

with the devotees who joined the study circle on my arrival there. From that time up to the summer of 1936, with different groups I studied Swami Brahmananda's Spiritual Teachings, Narada Bhakti Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and the major portion of Sri Krishna and Uddhava, also gave various readings from the Upanishads, Raja Yoga and other religious works. I also held special classes for individual aspirants and gave interviews to many who came for personal instructions. All the class notes, taken down by one of the most prominent devotees, helped to take the message also to persons outside the groups and would form the materials for books on practical spiritual life in future.

Up to the summer of 1936 I had my headquarters practically at Wiesbaden. After this I made Switzerland the base of the Vedanta work in the countries of Central Europe.

*At Geneva (Switzerland):* At the beginning of February, 1936, I went to Geneva for the second time and stayed there for nearly four months as the guest of a kind friend, who years back was drawn towards the message of the Vedanta and came to be intimately known to me during my last visit in the spring of 1935.

At Geneva I held regular meetings four times a week at two places in different parts of the town. I also spoke there under the auspices of the International Theosophical Society on the Synthesis of the Eastern and Western cultures. In the course of the lectures I pointed out the necessity for both the Easterner and the Westerner to preserve the best in the culture of each, and assimilate what is best in the other, thus maintaining

their respective individuality and special characteristics, without attempting at any thoughtless uniformity which would mean the cultural death of both.

During my stay at Geneva, I spoke in connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary on the Message of Ramakrishna and also gave illustrated lectures on the Ramakrishna Movement both at Geneva and the 'Institute Monier' at Verzoix. I also held several religious classes at the school for the benefit of students.

I paid a short visit to Geneva both in the summer and autumn of 1937 and also met the members of the group, who have been continuing their readings with a remarkable steadiness. I was greatly delighted to see how the various translations of Swami Vivekananda's works and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna so enthusiastically published by Monsieur Jean Herbert and his friends, as well as his radio talks (and articles, published in the French Quarterly *Action et Pensée*) on the great teachers of modern India, are creating a remarkable interest amongst many, some of whom I had the pleasure of meeting there.

*At Lausanne (Switzerland)* : In March, 1936, I went to Lausanne at the invitation of the local Theosophical Society and spoke there on the 'Message of Vedanta and the Ideal of Spiritual Evolution and Self-realisation.' In connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary I also gave an illustrated lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna and his Movement' under the auspices of the 'Societe Vaudoise d'Etudes Psychiques.' Dr. Ed. Bertholet, the President of the Society, spoke in French on the life and teachings of the

Master, beautifully introducing the subject and referring to the celebrations that were being held in connection with the birth Centenary in different parts of the world.

At Lausanne I conducted several group meetings in the home of a prominent devotee, in which I spoke on the spiritual ideal and practice, and also held many discussions with those who came.

I visited Lausanne both in the summer and autumn of 1937. Besides holding many group meetings, I spoke twice on the theory and practice of meditation at the request of the 'Societe Vaudoise d'Etudes Psychiques'. All previous lectures as well as the present ones, which I gave in English were translated into French. They created an amount of interest amongst those who listened.

*At St. Moritz (Switzerland)* : Ever since the group was started in January, 1935, at this small town famous as a summer and winter sport resort in the heart of the Alps, the members of the group have been conducting regular classes with a wonderfully sustained enthusiasm. I visited St. Moritz in 1936 and 1937 both during summer and autumn, and had readings twice or more every week. The universal message of Vedanta and the inspiring teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda have given a new meaning to the life of some of the aspirants.

A quarterly magazine—*The Vedanta*—was issued both in English and German during the year 1937 and reached many readers in different countries in Europe. It is the product of the labour of love of some of the devoted students of Vedanta who are working in a spirit of co-operation, with a view to share the



spiritual ideas with their fellow truth-seekers. *The Vedanta* with its universal tone is bringing light to many and is being highly appreciated. At present the copies are made with the help of a duplicator. If sufficient support be forthcoming, it may some day appear in a more dignified form in print.

*In Paris (France):* At the very end of March, 1936, I visited Paris in connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary meetings organised there. Prof. Masson-Oursel who holds the chair of Indian Philosophy at the University, delivered a lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna' at Musee Guimet, and another on 'Swami Vivekananda—the Disciple of Ramakrishna' at the Institute of the Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne, the great university of Paris. I went from Geneva for taking part in the second meeting and spoke at the end, pointing out the relationship between the Master and the Disciple, which was in a certain sense like that between the silent and the thundering clouds,—both being two-fold manifestations of the same power. In Ramakrishna the ancient ideals of Vedanta were realised in a silent and quiet way, while in Vivekananda they became very dynamic and thundering. It was through the disciple that the message spread all over India and even to Western lands, bringing a new awakening and inspiration, stimulating the life of spiritual aspirants and urging them not only to live a life of silent worship and meditation, but also to serve their fellow beings through different forms of creative service.

In the course of my stay for more than two weeks in Paris, I spoke at the Society of Friends, met also the

Friends of Buddhism, conducted several group meetings and also gave interviews to many. In my talks I tried to point out the universal aspect of Vedanta and the practical illustrations as given in the wonderful lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, who held before all the great ideal that religion is realisation.

The French translations of the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, brought out by Monsieur Herbert and others, mainly with the help of Miss MacLeod—the great American friend of Swami Vivekananda and the Movement bearing his Master's name—are fast disseminating the message which was first brought to the French-speaking people through Romain Rolland's epoch-making works on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. A field for future activity is thus being prepared, and the time is not far off when a French-speaking Swami of the Order will be in great demand for working amongst those drawn towards the teachings. Being informed of the growing interest in France by Monsieur Herbert and others, the authorities of the Order anticipated the future needs. With the financial support given by Miss MacLeod, they sent Swami Siddheswarananda, a well-tried and fully qualified worker of the Order, to Paris for getting himself prepared for the work.

My second visit to Paris took place at the end of July, 1937, when Swami Siddheswarananda arrived there in the company of Mr. V. Subramanya Iyer of Mysore, the esteemed friend of our Movement, who came on invitation for taking part in the Philosophical Congress, held this year in Paris. Both the Swami and myself

attended the Congress and also came in close touch with Professor Monsieur Foucher, who is in charge of the Institute of Indian Civilisation at the Sorbonne, and other professors and scholars.

During the short period of my third visit to Paris in November, 1937, I was delighted to see how Swami Siddheswarananda<sup>1</sup> is fast progressing in his study of the French language and culture, and is also establishing points of contact with some of the spiritual movements and aspirants there.

*At Zurich (Switzerland):* During my visit to Zurich towards the end of 1935, I came to know a number of spiritually-minded persons and found the possibility of starting Vedanta work there in future. In 1936, I went there towards the end of November and stayed on till the end of June, 1937. During these months I came to have a close contact with many highly cultured persons including professors, clergymen, university students and business people. With the invaluable help of Herr Rudolf Muller of Reformhaus Muller, a sincere friend and admirer of the Ramakrishna Movement, I began my activities at Zurich. In the lecture hall generously placed at my disposal by Herr Muller, I first gave a few public lectures on the 'Spiritual Message of Vedanta', 'Soul's evolution and the Yogic Paths', 'Yoga and Self-realisation', 'Ramakrishna—the Modern Indian Prophet', and then started regular classes twice a week. I gave general talks on spiritual topics and also numerous readings from the Upanishads, the Baghavad Gita, Raja Yoga, the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, etc. Illustrated lectures on the Ramakrishna Movement were also

given to select audiences. As the result of all these some earnest souls—both ladies and gentlemen—came to form a study circle, which may develop into a society in future.

A small Vedanta library has also been started for the benefit of those interested in spiritual matters, and both books and periodicals are being freely circulated amongst them. Persons greatly drawn towards the message, are holding group meetings regularly and are thus keeping ablaze a little Homa-fire, which is expected to grow with the flow of time.

I visited Zurich again in October, 1937, for two weeks, gave regular talks, held discussions and had interviews with a number of devotees and friends.

Somehow or other Zurich, the most important business centre in Switzerland, has become the central place for the publication of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in the German language. The German translation of the Life and Message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda by Romain Rolland was brought out by a publishing firm located near Zurich. The same publishers also issued an admirable edition of the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, translated into German by Mrs. Emma von Pelet. This noble lady, along with Mrs. Alwine von Keller, has taken up the translation of our publications as a labour of love and that in a spirit of whole-hearted consecration.

December 1937 saw the publication of Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga in German—the first two translated by another devotee, but edited by Mrs. von Pelet and the third one translated by Mrs. von Pelet herself.

The books have been beautifully published by a well known publishing firm at Zurich through the generosity of Miss MacLeod already referred to, who also financed the publication of these and other works translated by Monsieur Herbert into French. There is no doubt that all these publications are bringing the Message within the reach of many and are sure to have far-reaching effects in future.

*At The Hague (Holland) :* I am writing this report from The Hague, where I came in the middle of November, 1937. Here, too, I have been instrumental in just starting the Vedanta work. The original move was made by Mrs. Agatha Liefcrinck, who was previously one of the most devoted members of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, California, U. S. A. Eager to share with others the teachings which have brought a new light and peace to her soul, she came in touch with some spiritual seekers and has been lending them books from her private library which she has freely placed at the disposal of others. Immediately on my arrival here I came in contact with these aspirants. Later on, I spoke publicly and also to select audiences on the message of Vedanta and the ideals lived and preached by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. I am now giving regular readings to those drawn towards the teachings, and as its result a good study circle is in the process of formation. After having consolidated the little work already started, I propose to give some public lectures in the near future at The Hague, to establish cultural contact with many spiritual persons and Societies, and also extend the work to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and other neighbouring towns in Holland.

### | THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

During the past four years and more, many individuals and groups have been closely drawn towards the rational and universal message of the Vedanta and the practical and inspiring teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda at Wiesbaden in Germany, and also at St. Moritz, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich in Switzerland, in Paris—the great capital of France—at Warsaw—the chief city of Poland—and at many other places in different countries. As already mentioned, the beginnings of the Vedanta work have been made at The Hague and is also expected to be made in other towns of the country.

There are many persons who previously came to know of the message from books. In the course of the last four years and more many of them and also many new people have come in closer contact with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Movement through lectures, talks, classes, interviews, correspondence, circulation of class notes and through our literature and journals in English and other languages. The small libraries started at different places have been slowly and steadily helping in the quick spread of the message. The number of persons, coming within the sphere of influence of the Movement, is fast increasing through all these.

The pioneering work was begun and is still being conducted in the midst of many great difficulties. Economic uncertainties, cultural exclusiveness, political unsettlement and psychical restlessness have hampered the work. But still, through Divine grace and the support of friends the Movement is growing steadily

though slowly, and its circle of devotees and admirers is fast increasing. The teachings of Vedanta are bringing new hopes and solace to many a depressed and weary heart.

The pioneering work is still to be conducted by us without being burdened and hampered by the immediate starting of any formal centre. Voluntary offerings for maintaining such a centre have not been forthcoming yet. Even the expenses for carrying on the present work are being borne mainly by two or three self-sacrificing friends of the cause in the West. The generous contributions of H. H. the Maharajah of Mysore, a great lover of the Vedanta, have twice enabled us to tide over the difficulties. For this we express our grateful thanks to His Highness, who takes

a personal interest in the Movement both in India and Europe. We offer our sincere thanks also to the other friends of the cause, who have helped the work and contributed to its success in different ways.

Our immediate task is this. The message is to be propagated far and wide. The circle of devotees and supporters must be made to increase. Then alone will arise the question of starting a regular centre. The future lies in the hands of Him who is the Divine Inspirer and Guide of all.

"May He, the Indwelling Spirit, the remover of all evils, the Presiding Deity of all sacred undertakings, be pleased. For, He being pleased, the whole universe is pleased ; He being satisfied, the whole universe is satisfied."

## DURANT DRAKE AND VEDANTA

*By Anil Kumar Sarkar, M.A.*

[Mr. Sarkar is a fellow of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. In this article he draws attention to the points of similarity and contrast between the theories of knowledge propounded by Durant Drake and the non-dualistic system of Indian philosophy.]

**T**HE Vedanta philosophy defines this world as a creation of Maya, and ascribes our knowledge of it to ignorance (Avidya or Ajnana). This peculiar position of Vedanta philosophy at once leads us to consider whether our perceptual knowledge has any value or not. It has a value in the sense that it is a realm of appearance and ignorance, and we have to escape from this apparent world by gaining a right knowledge of it. So we find that non-dualistic Vedanta does not tell us to examine the world as it is, but it tells

us to go beyond the common sense, realistic view of the universe so that we shall understand this world of multiplicity and change to be nothing but the outcome of the self-shining character of the Universal Consciousness or Caitanya. The Advaitic theory of perception is an attempt to interpret how the self-shining Caitanya appears as subject and as object, and how their identity is to be determined.

The philosophy of Durant Drake is a sad contrast to this position of non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy. It also

posits that we have a knowledge of a 'world of appearance', for our knowledge is mediated through 'data' or 'essences' which are but the 'psychic fusions' of the cerebral processes at the time when the organism tries to adapt itself to psychical or physical events. These 'data' or 'essences', although they have bases in the cerebral processes, are not mental; they are not even physical; for the physical events are highly complex, and these are simplifications or summations of the cerebral processes. They are used for understanding physical or mental events. They have their own realm, they are used by consciousness as 'data'. Without these 'symbols' consciousness cannot operate.

From this it follows that our knowledge of the mental and physical worlds is 'symbolical'; we cannot rend the veil of 'data' or 'essence'; we have to live in a world of appearance, and an escape from this world is never possible.

This attitude has been boldly maintained by Santayana in his famous book entitled 'Scepticism and Animal Faith.' In this book he shows enough grounds for his scepticism and warns us not to put absolute confidence in our 'animal faith'. The human being naturally relies on the 'animal faith.' He takes the world as revealed to him by the 'essences' to be real; but with the appearance of the higher faculty of 'intuition' he is ushered into the land of 'scepticism.' Santayana, therefore, boldly points out that 'nothing is ever present to me except some essence; so that nothing that I possess in intuition, or actually see, is ever 'there' (p. 99).

But this does not point out that the 'essence' never indicates real existence. The 'existences' are 'given' to intuition, but the warning is not to take the 'existences' as such. We are to be sceptics. It gives us humility, but at the same time it gives the right attitude towards the 'real things'.

From this we can conclude that this world of existence as it appears to us must be tested by intuition, for it is not what it seems. We have to battle against our 'animal faith' by our 'scepticism'. We might say after Vedanta that this 'animal faith' is our Ajnana, inducing us to believe in what we see. Santayana is milder; he says scepticism is the right attitude. To think that our knowledge of existence ought to be literal, is nothing but the height of folly. Our knowledge is 'symbolical'. We must believe in our intuition which welcomes scepticism as its guide. It is then we can say with Santayana that 'intuition, when it is placid and masterful enough to stand alone, free from anxiety of delusion about matters of fact, is a delightful exercise, like a play' (p. 103). Elsewhere in the same book he says, "The life of reason as I conceive it is a mere romance, and the life of Nature a mere fable; such pictures have no metaphysical value, even if as sympathetic fictions they had some psychological truths" (p. 101).

This sounds like the Advaitic view. But Advaita Vedanta goes further. It not only says that our faith in this world is due to 'ignorance', but it says also definitely that an escape from this world by a right knowledge of the relation of objects to the self is all

that is necessary for a man. We shall find, therefore, in the theory of perception as propounded by this philosophy, not an attempt to point out the truth and error that are found in this world of appearance, but an attempt to show that the 'world of appearance' only points to a 'world of reality.' The reality manifests itself in the world of appearance. It is not, therefore, concerned with the right adaptation of our data to the existences that are mental or physical as Drake supposes, or with the 'scepticism' regarding the existences as reported to us by our data. It is interested only in the right knowledge of things. It boldly points out its one truth—i.e., not to rely on this world of appearance; we are all to go beyond this world to find the one self-shining Brahman.

Let us now consider the three theories of perception as propounded by the non-dualistic philosophy. The aim in each case, as far as perception is concerned, is to establish a relation between the self and the object.

According to the first view the individual self is finite and the objective world is independent of it. We shall have to find out their connection. The connection is established by mind or Antahkarana. It is said that Antahkarana or mind, which is but a function of the knowing self, goes out with the senses and assumes the 'form' of the object. This 'going out' or again the assuming of the 'form' of the object should not be taken as fantastic. Really speaking there is no absolute separation between the subjective and objective realms, for the same Caitanya or Consciousness underlies both. This tendency to go out appears like the 'ideas' of Bradley

which have constant tendency to meet with their 'others' or 'facts'. The underlying relation alone accounts for the going out of Antahkarana and the assuming of the form of the object. The neo-realism of Alexander removes the gap between the mental and the objective world when it says that they are all evolutes from the same original stuff of 'space-time system'. The Gestalt school of psychology holds that in perception we perceive the 'figure' or the 'form' that bobs out of the 'perceptual situation'. The 'figure' is the result of the dynamic relation that exists between the percipient mind and the physical environment. So we should not be startled by this theory of the Advaitic school of thought. The critical realism of Drake points out that the self with its function of consciousness projects the 'datum' out in space and time in the act of perception. The datum only reveals to us the features of reality. So the function of mind or Antahkarana, as is seen here, is a rational theory.

This is the terminus of the relation between Advaita Vedanta and the Western Philosophy. Here the Vedanta takes a further step. It asks further the question, viz., how the 'going out' and the 'assuming the form' of the object are to be explained. This takes us to the heart of this philosophy. The object, being independent of the individual self, shines not through the light of the self, but through that of Brahman itself that underlies both. It is the same consciousness that reveals itself now as pot, now as tree, etc., to the individual self. The self and the object appear different due to two different modes that determine the same consci-

ousness that underlies them. "The determining factor in the case of the knowing self is the Antahkarana, and in the case of the object the particular group of properties which qualify it into that peculiar object."<sup>1</sup> Both of them are creations of Ajnana. The Antahkarana or mind, by going to the object, removes the distinction between the two sets of differentiating factors peculiar to the subject and object, and establishes identity between the Consciousness as subject and object. The function of Antahkarana here is the revelation of identity (Abhedabhivyakti). This view is supported by the author of the Vedanta-paribhasha.

The second theory holds that the individual self is not finite, it is infinite. But from this we cannot conclude that it is always conscious of all objects. The individual self lights up only those objects which appear to it through the medium of Antahkarana or mind. In the act of perception, the self, being identified with the Antahkarana which assumes the form of the object, receives the tinge of the object. In other words, the Antahkarana gives the objective tinge to the self. So this theory is known as Chiduparaga. The author of the Vivarana and some others hold this view.

According to the third view the individual self is infinite and also the ground of this world. Everything has its being in the self. But this gives rise to the difficulty, viz., why the objects are not perceived all at a time.

To this the following answers can be given. All the ideas may be present, but they are not manifest to it at once. This is due to the forces that prevent them from coming up to the surface of consciousness. These forces are the forces of ignorance or Ajnana. This veil or force of ignorance is removed by the mind or Antahkarana. It rends the veil of ignorance. This theory is called, Avaranabbibhava.

From this we conclude that perception is not mere perception. It is not merely seeing the 'apparent world' as of Drake or of Santayana, it is establishing identity between Consciousness as subject and as object, or imparting to the subject the tinge of the object, or the rending of the veil of ignorance hanging between the subject and object. All these are done by Antahkarana or mind which is a function of the self that is transcendent, the witness of all that goes on in our ordinary experience due to ignorance.

Drake is concerned with the problem of successful or unsuccessful 'adaptation' of our data to mental or physical events. He is concerned with truth, error, illusion and hallucination; or again with our varied imaginations that make up our mental life. But the Vedanta philosophy does not worry itself with all these. They are only facts. The aim of Advaita philosophy is to point to the path of reality that is necessary in every act of perception. The need for an 'apparent world' can very well be denounced if we simply reflect on the high-soaring thoughts of this school of philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup>D. M. Datta : Six Ways of Knowing, P. 76.

## MEDITATIONS

*By E. E. Speight*

[The following passages in prose and verse are from the diaries of a writer and teacher who has now been thirty years in the East, half of that time in Japan and half in India. As a professor in various colleges in Japan, and the successor to the post of Lapcadis Hearn in Tokyo and as professor in charge of English at the two colleges in Hyderabad, Mr. Speight has constantly been in intimate association with young men of the East, and he has written much on Oriental subjects for the periodicals of various countries in the old and new worlds. He is now in retirement, but on the basis of his long experience he is preparing books to help students in the East in their struggles with the intricacies of the English language.]

1

**W**HAT has gone we must strive to make good, otherwise we pass away like smoke. Ritual may help us, and prayer and other forms of discipline; but something more is needed,—and that is constant effort to widen the horizon, to break the net of circumstance. There must be poetry in our lives, not mere repetition of pattern, but creation and so ascension.

2

Hearken not too often unto the wise,  
The trusty ancient shepherds of mankind,  
Lest they should cast a dark veil over the eyes  
Of the young, the joyous creatures of their day,  
Wiser than the wise have yet divined,  
Wiser even than they.

3

A Japanese friend said to me: If we wish to be happy, we must bid even the humblest servant good-morning.

4

As I walked home in the moonlight with my friend, he told me that his

old mother in the South still worships the new moon, and therefore whenever he sees it he thinks of her.

When the moon came forth, snow had given the temple a strange purity, as though One had said: All things thought here shall be forgiven.

6

Only realise that a man can give what he himself has not,—such great gifts as hope and happiness,—and many another miracle becomes credible.

7

There is a great truth underlying the old Chinese veneration of writing: it is the truth that writing, like every form of human action, is part of some divine ritual whose purport no one can even imagine, some mystic ceremony that transcends the vision of mortality.

8

Song is the flash of a sword  
Made keen by joy to shear  
The tangled web of life.  
Song is the incense rising  
From altars whereon lies  
The wealth of loyal hearts.



Song is the wine that flows  
From the press of human souls  
When sorrow treads them down.

9

In the dark trees around the shrine  
the planets are hanging, magic fruits  
of night, and the southern horizon  
quivers with lightning as the flank of  
a grey deer in deadly fright.

10

Errors, like withered leaves, fall  
away from a spirit that is reaching  
to the sunlight, and it is generous to  
let them lie and cover the roots.

11

How different are the visions of the  
eye and those of the heart. That  
flowers fade, love dies, and life comes  
to an end,—all these tidings of our  
senses are transformed in the alembic  
of faith into their very contraries, and  
we know that it is into life and beauty  
that all things move,—into eternal  
life and everlasting beauty of spirit.

12

The wings of his soul were not given  
to their form in Arden woods. The  
flash of auroral visions, the glitter of  
midland seas, the cloud-storms of  
Himalayan fastnesses,—these had not  
been for him in vain, long ere his race  
arose.

13

The melancholy of man is a sign  
that power is concentrated in the  
heart and waiting its release in crea-  
tive activity.

14

The Sun that drives the oceans  
of the world

Doth not disdain  
To flash in splendour on the  
spider's toil  
Through drifts of April rain.

15

Ever the greater part lies in the  
unknown. The proudest nation in the  
world has still its Atlantis to discover,  
and that within its own borders.

16

When shame overpowers a man,  
Wisdom hides her head and is silent,  
but Love, with the tears starting,  
holds forth her healing hands.

17

Across the Unknown  
I cry to Him who made me  
That He answer why,  
And out of utter silence  
Cometh the wonder of dawn.

18

We who had lost him called him  
renegade,  
As though he sought the night.  
We could not see  
The shadows he would flee.  
He left the world and passed  
into the light  
From which all worlds are  
made.

19

A tiny kitten, the colour of sea-sand  
and foam, laying her little head  
among a company of rosy apples,  
and strangely stirred as the wild frag-  
rance,—and no one in the whole world  
saw it but myself.

20

You spoke to me in pure and  
beautiful parables,  
Yet you never opened your heart  
to me.  
In my hands you laid the things  
you had written,  
Yet I could not read through their  
clear and virgin candour.

For the years in their thousands  
are gathered between us,  
And your shining palace towers  
beyond the pathless moun-  
tains of sullen doubt.

## 21

In even the most beautiful lines the  
change of the mouth in reading them  
may be very little, but let these vowel  
sounds swell out into the universe and  
they become sonorous and fateful as  
the voice of the elements,—just as the  
temple bell fills the mountain valley  
with ancient sorrow.

So poetry is at times the soul of  
the world singing through the heart  
of man.

## 22

I dance, and know not why....  
ages ago  
Upon a mountain ledge I killed  
my foe.

## 23

I am the lord of a vast domain of  
light and shade. Forests of centuries  
ago, high waterfalls in deep mountain  
gorges, bridges innumerable, and  
summits inaccessible to me,—all these  
are mine, together with the loyal  
service of more vassals and vavasours  
than I have ever been able to count.  
For I let them go their way, even as  
I go mine. From far and wide, from  
all the world over, come pilgrims to  
the shrines that nestle in my misty  
woods, and on their offerings live the  
men and women who guard the wind-  
ing ways of my delight. And when  
none are aware of it, often by night,  
I wander from place to place, listen-  
ing to the fireside talk of the wood-  
folk, touching the smooth red pillars  
or the bosses of old bronze on the  
dark portals, or drinking of the deep

wells in the wild moonlight. Huge  
woodcutters roam the secret ways of  
my forests. Dark clouds are their  
mantles, and very swiftly do they  
wield their flaming axes. They are  
feared of the folk, and such as have  
seen them speak of the vision with  
halting breath and strange eyes.

## 24

In my dark chamber starlight  
through one chink  
Brings near the heavenly regions  
and the deep  
Eternity beyond, the while I think  
Dim thoughts of waters lulling  
flowers asleep.  
I would be free from ghosts of  
space and time  
That walk familiar regions of the  
night,  
In my dark chamber, to a simple  
rhyme  
The world is rolling onward into  
light.

## 25

Friedrich Lange assures us that  
behind the two corresponding worlds,  
—that of matter and that of consci-  
ousness—there is an unknown third,  
which is their common cause. Of  
course it is so, and is not this un-  
known third staring us in the face?  
Is it not all around us and could we  
not see it but for our fated and fatal  
propensity to analysis? This un-  
known third reveals itself in man in  
his completeness, man as he moves  
across his allotted section of eternity,  
man as the centre of eternity for the  
moment, man viewed in the light of  
the immeasurable, with fate looming  
around him. After three centuries of  
analysis do we not need a creative  
epoch? And must we not prepare for  
this by viewing the world and all its

attributes as a whole, thankful to those who have probed and so made our knowledge deeper and wider? Nature nowhere teaches us to take to pieces and set asunder; even in her states of decay she is fostering new life.

## 26

In the sweltering heat of the classroom I stepped to the open window, and looked out into a green cave of trellissed foliage. And suddenly came a little breeze from some distant roll of frolicsome sea. The willow roof parted, and I caught one moment's

glimpse of a far peak lighted with gleaming snow. Its name is not known beyond the frontiers of this northland of Honshu, but it dwells in my memory with sun and moon and stars.

## 27

In the tear that rolled from the eye of the waggoner's bull  
An ancient shrine was mirrored,  
sunset shone,  
And mighty trees and woodland  
hollows full  
Of darkness dwelt a moment and  
were gone.

## WHO IS A TRUE SRI VAISHNAVA?

*By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.*

[Mr. Srinivasachariar is the joint editor of *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam*, the Tamil organ of the R. K. Mission. A good Sri Vaishnava himself and a scholar of eminence, his writing is remarkable for accuracy, fervour and suggestiveness. In this and other essays he will give an exposition of the spirit and principles of Sri Vaishnava faith—one of the two most influential forms of religion in South India.]

*(Continued from previous issue)*

### THE ROOTS OF HIS GREAT FAITH

**H**OWEVER noble, rational and consistent a philosophy may be, it is of little avail in practical life, unless and until it is backed up by a living faith in the assurances of those great saviours of souls and Divine personalities who are the exemplars and embodiments of the doctrines of that philosophy, and who redeem men by their mere look or touch. The faith of the Vaishnava in the doctrine of self-surrender and the adoption of God as the means—a means which is no longer under his control but which controls him completely—rests on a few promises of God Himself in His incarnations; and these exercise a

sway over the minds of Vaishnavas, more potent than mere verbal assertions of truths revealed through man by God. For after all, the Vaishnava lives more by his faith than by his intellect, which plays only the subservient part of supplying a rational basis of his faith. The first of these great promises is that of Bhagavan Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita: "Giving up all Dharmas, seek refuge in Me only; I shall liberate you from all sins, fear not." Again elsewhere in the Gita, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: "You better promise on my behalf that my devotee never comes to grief." The second great promise is that of Sri Rama on the occasion

of the surrender of Vibhishana on the sea-shore in the following words: "I protect him who surrenders himself to me once for all, saying, 'I am for thee alone'—this is my vow." Again in the *Varaha Purana*, the Bhagavan gives the following assurance to His Divine Consort: "Let a man, while possessing a sound mind in a sound body and in a state of equilibrium, think of Me, the birthless; then in his dying moments of agony, when he lies down like inert wood unable to think of Me, I shall think of that devotee of mine and lead him to the highest goal." Consistently with this assurance the great Alwar prayed to God in a hymn, "I cannot think of Thee in that hour of death when my mind and senses would get out of my control; so, Lord, even now I have reminded Thee of the necessity for showering Thy grace on me at the final hour." The last great promise is that of God to Sri Ramanuja at Srirangam, where one day the Lord in His great condescension and out of His love for Ramanuja was pleased to grant the following boon: "It shall be our pleasure to confer on you and all your followers everlasting bliss in my eternal Abode." It is an imperative duty of every Vaishnava to remind himself of these great Divine assurances every day and on every possible occasion with a view to keep his faith living and glowing and to provide an incentive for fulfilling on his own part the necessary conditions implied in the promises.

#### THE SOURCES OF HIS INSPIRATION

As in the life of every man, so in the life of a Vaishnava there are three main aspects, intellectual, emotional and volitional; and each aspect of

his life is moulded and inspired by the thoughts, feelings and lives of mighty personages who shine like luminaries in the firmament of Vaishnavism.

The key-note of his intellectual life is an implicit faith in Divine revelation through Incarnations, seers or Rishis, Alwars and Acharyas. The chief sources of inspiration for his intellectual life are the Sanskrit Vedas and the Smritis, (which are the commandments of God), the Vedanta Sutras, the epics, the Puranas (the most important of which are the Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana), the four thousand hymns of Alwars, and the crude commentaries and other works written by the Acharyas for the sole benefit of devotees wishing to pursue the path of the Vaishnavas. The Vedas are regarded as the ultimate source of all the teachings of the Rishis, the Alwars and the Acharyas; and its two portions—the *Karmakanda* or ritualistic portion and the *Jnanakanda* or knowledge portion—in the view of the Vaishnavas, deal respectively with the performance of *Karmas* as a mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, *i.e.*, with work as worship, and with the goal of all work and worship, namely, the Supreme Being. The first part of the Vedas is expounded in detail by the Smritis written by the great Rishis, and the other part is interpreted elaborately in the two epic poems, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, primarily, and in the Puranas secondarily. The *Ramayana*, depicting the life histories of Rama (the Incarnation of God) and of His Divine Consort Sita, is looked upon as an embodiment of the doctrine of self-surrender or 'Prapatti', each canto furnishing some concrete illustration of the doc-

trine and its efficacy. It furnishes also a clear and convincing demonstration of the power of meditation and grace exercised by Sita, the Divine Mother of the universe, and Her vicarious suffering on behalf of mortals immersed in sorrow. The Mahabharata sets forth in detail the infinite condescension of Sri Krishna, an Incarnation of God, in placing himself on a par with the poorest and the humblest of mankind and in playing the role of an ordinary messenger for kings and also in preaching the Gita. Sri Krishna, the eternal means for attaining Himself, is worshipped as the Supreme Teacher of all teachers, who both by his precepts in the Gita and by His example, established the ideals of Karma Yoga (the path to salvation through work), Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion and self-surrender to Divine Grace), and Jnana Yoga (the path of discrimination and knowledge). The Brahma Sutras of Vyasa are considered as a succinct epitome of all the Upanishads and the Sri Bhashya of Ramanuja, the commentary on those Sutras, as the only correct and consistent interpretation of the philosophy of the Upanishads as presented by Vyasa in his aphorisms. The four thousand hymns of the Alvars and the commentaries on them provide even the masses devoid of a knowledge of Sanskrit with the quintessence of the Vedas and a popular version of them in Tamil. In addition, these hymns excel the original Sanskrit Vedas in their power of kindling the fire of devotion in the minds of lay readers.

The key-note of the Vaishnava's devotional life, as also the chief source of inspiration for it, is the worship of a Personal God with attributes, coupl-

ed with the worship of His devotees—the Alvars and the Acharyas. The Divine images of God in the sacred shrines of India are, in the eyes of the Vaishnavas, the hallowed abodes where God, in response to the earnest and persistent entreaties of pure and ardent devotees, has manifested Himself as divine, living forms, and continues to live as a Divine Presence that can be felt by all true devotees. Hence those visible representations of the Divinity are looked upon as channels for the flow of Divine grace to anyone who would commune with God through them. Many are the instances of men and women who at the very sight of these living manifestations of God have been blessed with intense devotion, renunciation, peace and joy. No image is deemed to be endowed with sufficient sanctity, if it has not been consecrated by the living touch of God invoked by a man of realisation; and its sanctity increases in proportion to the number of saints of realisation who have seen the living God therein and communed with Him. The temples of Conjeevaram, Tirupathi, Srirangam and Srivilliputtur stand supreme among the temples of South India, and even residence in the vicinities of such temples accompanied with devotion and faith is productive of much spiritual merit. It is believed that even mighty personages of the type of Alvars owe their Divine inspiration, intuition and ecstasy to the living God in such temples.

Another important aspect of the Vaishnavas' devotional life is their intense faith in the Guru-parampara or the chain of Gurus. The practical aspect of every true religion necessarily involves the transmission from

Guru to disciple of the living spiritual power that has its source in the very fountainhead of all spirituality, God. God is the ultimate teacher of all teachers and the very first Guru who reveals Himself to His chosen disciples. To them he vouchsafes a flood of spiritual power, thereby making them the teachers of humanity. They communicate this power to the disciples and become teachers in their turn, and thus the power flows through a continuous chain of teachers for several centuries, for the benefit of humanity at large. The vivifying touch of that power is indispensable for an individual, both for attaining the goal of realisation and for kindling spiritual fire in the hearts of others, and the Guru in whom the power is vested is looked upon as God. The line of Vaishnavite Gurus has been figuratively described thus : "The Alwars rise up from above the ocean of Godhead like heavy black clouds that have drunk deep of its Divine essence and attributes. They pour forth their contents and empty themselves on the Himalayas of Sri Nathamuni, the great teacher ; the fertilising stream descends down along the two big waterfalls of two great teachers, flows into the mighty river of Yamunacharya, branches off along the main channel of Maha Purna and fills to overflowing the great lake of Sri Ramanuja, from which the waters gush forth through the sluice gates of our own Gurus and thus the fields of Samsara are irrigated. Every Vaishnava, to save himself from sorrow and bondage must irrigate the soil of his mind with the fertilising currents of Divine power flowing through the chain of Gurus.

The key-note of the volitional aspect of a Vaishnava's life is the merging of the individual will in the Supreme Will through love and annihilation of self ; and this merging is sought to be achieved through service rendered to God or His devotees with a spirit of renunciation and devotion. The chief sources of inspiration in this direction are lives of the great Alwars and the Acharyas, each of which is revealed to the discerning eye as a mighty uninterrupted stream of joyous loving service done to God in His various manifestations and to His devotees. Some of these have served more with the intellect, some others more with their heart, and others again more with their hands ; yet in all of them, service for its own sake, motiveless and selfless, has been the predominant characteristic. Lakshmana in the Ramayana is the ideal servant-devotee who was born, bred up and lived for the service of his Divine Master, Sri Rama, in His presence and by His side, and for that only, as he himself expressed once : "Sri Rama looks upon me as His younger brother ; but my attitude towards Him is only that of a devoted servant who serves his master out of the infatuation produced by His Divine qualities." Bharata, the younger brother of Sri Rama, typifies the ideal of extreme dependence like that of inert matter on Sri Rama in as much as he, for the sake of realising the state of unquestioning submission to the will of Sri Rama, suppressed even his keen longings for service in His presence and preferred to rule His kingdom in accordance with His will like a humble tool in His hands. Satrugna, the last brother, exemplifies the ideal of service to devotees in preference to that of

service to God. Among Alwars a few have been conspicuous for service in the temples in the form of the construction of temples, their renovation, the cultivation of flower gardens for temple use and the like. Yamuna-charya and preferably Ramanuja-charya stand as symbols of apostolic fervour and for the ideal of missionary service to humanity. Sri Anantalwar is the personification of that indefatigable and uncompromising zeal for absorption in service to the Lord in the temple, that would not mind physical, mental or other privations,

however severe, would not brook the participation of others in the work entrusted to one even under critical circumstances and would regard the presence of God before his eyes only as a distraction and as a hindrance to his service. These and other patterns of service which are the sources of perpetual inspiration for the Vaishnavas abound in the epics, the Bhagavata, the Puranas and the biographies of Vaishnavite saints and Gurus, a knowledge of which is considered important for ardent aspirants.

(Concluded)

## MODERN THOUGHT AND VEDANTA

By Swami Pranaveshananda

[Swami Pranaveshananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, makes in the following article, a review of some of the important conclusions of modern science on topics like matter, life and consciousness, and presents side by side the strikingly similar conclusions of the Vedantic thinkers. The contrast also is drawn wherever necessary.

In the March issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the writer of this article was by mistake introduced as the head of the Mission in Ceylon. It needs correction as given above.]

(Continued from previous issue)

### VI

#### LIFE

**A**CCORDING to modern scientists, earth is estimated to have existed two thousand million years ago. Life is calculated to have made its first appearance on earth some three hundred million years ago. Man seems to have come into existence first on this earth about one million years ago from the generalised stock common to him and the anthropoid ape. Sir Arthur Keith, the British Anthropologist, says: "We who believe that man has been evolved are certain that

the power which moulds and modifies the human mind is not situated outside the body but is an inherent quality of its living flesh."

The modern scientists cannot, however, say how life itself came into existence.

As against this view of modern science that life came into existence at a definite point of time after the formation of the earth, Sankara, the Vedantic philosopher holds that the embodied being (Jiva) is the reflection of the Supreme Being in the body-mind combination. Thus life has no existence apart from God. All great

men of India have declared that our life is but a stage on the way towards infinity which is beyond. In the Bhagavad Gita (XV, 7) it is said that an eternal portion of God has become the soul in this world of life. Life is a continuous struggle between a principle within and Nature outside. It is sustained by food and air. Starting from the lowest protoplasm, it has developed slowly and steadily to man, and ultimately it will be merged in God, thus completing the circle of its progress. While thus the modern scientists have not been able to define what life precisely is, the Indian sages have been able to give us a clear idea about it.

## V

### EVOLUTION

Modern Western thinkers are divided in their opinion about evolution. In the first place there are those who accept the Darwinian theory of natural selection. Darwin bases his theory of evolution upon the facts of heredity, of variation and of struggle for existence. He says that if all, or even half, the younger ones of the animal with the lowest fecundity, namely, the elephant, were to come to maturity and themselves breed, the whole globe would in a limited time become packed with elephants. So naturally there arises struggle for existence in which the weak are exterminated by the strong which reproduce their own species in turn. This theory of the survival of the fittest, i.e., survival of such organisms as are best adapted to their environment, was subsequently felt unsatisfactory as it did not explain certain facts, and investigations have led to the formulation of a new theory called emergent evolution. The

author of this theory is Prof. Lloyd Morgan. He attributes the evolutionary process to an independent spiritual principle entering into association with matter. He uses the word 'emergence' to describe the appearance, at particular stages of evolution, of new properties and qualities and faculties in living organisms. These qualities are not present in the germ, or at the embryonic stage, or at any stage of development, until they emerge in the course of evolution. This is purely a non-mechanistic process as it is attributed to a spiritual agency. There is a third theory called the creative evolution. Henri Bergson, the French Philosopher, is the author of this theory, and he ascribes the evolutionary process to some original vital impulse—'Elan Vital'. This vital urge is not confined merely to animal life but belongs to the creative activity of the whole universe and is seeking in different ways to realise itself along definite lines. Bergson says: "The essence of reality is becoming, that is, it is a continual and active process, a creative evolution." Bergson denies that this evolutionary process has anything to do with natural selection.

The Indian evolutionist Patanjali says that evolution applies only to matter and not to spirit. The process of evolution, starting from amœba to man, is not in the spirit; it is only matter that evolves. The potential power of the amœba in trying to express itself against circumstances and environments which are trying to hold it down, takes new body after body in order to fight against them. So the lowest protoplasm in this struggle takes up another body and so on,



until it becomes the Divine Man in whom the spirit fully manifests, conquering all environments of Nature. The bodies, from that of the lowest worm to that of the highest man, are really one series. The differences in bodies are but different expressions of the same series, one body changing into another until perfection is reached. In Patanjali's analysis of evolution, there is no absolute necessity for competition or natural selection as propounded by Darwin's theory. Infinite power lies in the lowest protoplasm as well as in the highest Divine Man, and it is the very nature of that infinite power to manifest. The same power lies in animal as in man, and when fitting circumstances appear, animal becomes man and man becomes divine. Struggle and competition, at least in the case of man, and especially in the higher stages of his development, is not at all applicable, whatever may be the case in the lower animal kingdom. Man, by the power of proper education and culture, through renunciation and sacrifice and meditation and concentration, can overcome all obstacles. Struggle and competition only abet and encourage crime, and perhaps a few in order to save themselves are likely to kill a large number under cover of this horrible Western theory of struggle and competition. Proper education and culture are sure to root out all evil propensities in man and smooth his path to highest manifestation.

Prof. Llyod Morgan no doubt attributes the evolutionary process to a spiritual principle but it is quite independent of matter with which it becomes associated. Again he says that the new properties, for example, life and mind, have emerged in the

course of evolution. His theory is quite untenable, firstly because according to him an outside spiritual agency coming from the void, as it were, causes the evolution. If the spirit were not in the protoplasm itself, no outside power can ever change its course of evolution. And secondly something cannot come out of nothing. No life or mind can emerge at any stage of the animal, if it is not already inherent in it. If the principle of continuity in evolution is accepted, then there should be no gap between the living and the non-living. There is a growing body of belief in the West that the non-living matter and the living beings differ only in degree but not in kind, and the same laws are at work among them both. This exactly corroborates the view of the Indian seers who attribute the presence of God in all animate and inanimate objects of the universe, be it an atom or a grain of sand or dry grass or a log of wood.

## VI

### MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Wells and Huxley in their book entitled "Science of Life" very lucidly express the view that some degree of consciousness cannot be denied even to amœba, the lowliest of all animals. The degree of consciousness no doubt varies according to the complexity of organisms. The authors of "Science of Life" hold that the brain is the organ bringing mind into effective activity. By observation we find that consciousness has a material substratum; it is always seen only in association with bodily life. Western scientists cannot definitely say what exactly is the relation between matter and mind on the one hand, and mind

and consciousness on the other. The American philosopher Santayana says: "That matter cannot by transposition of its particles, become what we call consciousness, is an admitted truth, that mind cannot become its own occasion or determine its own march, though it be a truth not recognised by all philosophers, is in itself no less obvious." To the Western thinkers, the problem of mind is rather baffling. All that can be known about the nature of mind is dependent on inference and the behaviour of men and animals. The inter-action between mind and body, they say, is beyond dispute but their relation is an unsolved riddle. So all attempts of the Western scientists at explaining the relation between mind and matter on the one hand, and mind and consciousness on the other, have been unsuccessful so far. Some thinkers, however, assume the existence of an essence more primitive than mind and matter which they call 'neutral stuff', and mind and matter seem to be a sort of composite of this stuff. But the materialists or mechanists believe that brain is the mind and mind is the brain, but no proof of any kind has been adduced by them to show that mind is the by-product of matter. The trend of modern thought, however, is towards the belief that mind is essentially free or creative, a *Vera Causa*, and that consciousness is not a mere function of the brain but rather uses the brain as an instrument. Here are some of the views expressed by eminent scientists as to what consciousness is. Sir James Jeans says: "I incline to the idealistic theory that consciousness is fundamental and the material universe is derivative from consciousness, not consciousness from

the material universe." Max Planck, a prominent German Physicist, says: "Consciousness cannot be explained in terms of matter and its laws. I regard consciousness as fundamental. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness." Sir Arthur Eddington says: "There is no question about consciousness being real or not. Consciousness is self-knowing, and the epithet 'real' adds nothing to it." He also says that the physical world has no actuality apart from its linkage. Prof. Einstein holds to the view that consciousness is fundamental.

The problem of relation between mind and matter and consciousness has been solved by the Indian thinkers long ago. According to the psychology of Samkhya, from the Mahat or the Universal Mind, down to the five elements including the individual mind, all categories are different modifications of one primordial matter called Prakriti in Sanskrit. Throughout it is all one. It is like the column of atmosphere, in which there are dense and rarified strata of one and the same stuff, air. All existence is the manifestation of one substance, so that mind is body and body is mind; mind is only a finer part of the same substance, of which the body, the grosser part, is also made. The material food that we eat is changed into mind. If we do not eat for some days, mind becomes weak and does not function, thereby proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that matter is mind. Mind is subtle as its vibrations are rapid and if the rate of vibration is lessened, mind itself becomes gross matter. And this mind is only an in-

strument in the hands of the Atman which is Consciousness Itself, through which It perceive the external world of matter.

## VII

### LAW OF CAUSALITY

All scientists until recently have unanimously adopted this principle of causality as a fundamental plank in their scientific research. Now they are not of one mind in this respect. Eddington is now firmly convinced that this law of causality has broken down entirely. He says : " I do not agree with Determinism. It seems to me contrary both to our intuition and the scientific evidence. Everybody, in practice, has an intuition of free-will. We find it difficult to believe that all our future actions are, as it were, already written down. And in the latest theories of matter we have had to introduce a principle of Indeterminacy. An electron does not seem to obey strictly determinate laws. We cannot predict exactly what it will do. And this does not seem to me to be a temporary difficulty due to our imperfect technique but a revelation of an inherent characteristic of the universe. Of course scientific determinism may come back. But I see no reason to believe that it will. Determinism is opposed both to our intuition and to all evidence. Why not drop it ? " Prof. Lindemann also says "Causal Law fails completely when applied rigidly to the behaviour of the ultimate particles of which reality is composed." Although Prof. Einstein believes with Eddington that in the ultimate analysis of the physical world causal sequence does not hold good in the present state of scientific knowledge, and that

in quantum phenomena the behaviour of electrons is not determined, he is not, unlike Eddington, of opinion that determinacy has gone for good. He opines that with more knowledge the time will come when the law of causality will have to be re-introduced in physics. Max Planck, the author of quantum theory, is also of the same opinion.

While thus the Western scientists are divided in their opinion about this law of causality, the Indian thinker Gaudapada had long ago proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable arguments in Chapter four of the Mandukya Karika that this law does not at all hold good ultimately; for he establishes by Ajatavada or the theory of non-creation that the Brahman or Reality has never become this universe. Law of causality plays its part when we believe in creation and its evolution. Gaudapada says that the universe exists only in the imagination of the seer who is ignorant and untutored.

## VIII

### ULTIMATE REALITY

Almost all the modern scientists have come to the conclusion that mind is fundamental and that matter is derivative from it. Even when they talk of atoms, electrons, etc., they are talking about things that depend upon their minds. All the chain of events and everything that are perceived by the senses are mental. And since they are mental Sir James Jeans postulates the existence of a "Universal Mind" in which all these have their being. So it is mind that has built up this objective universe of matter wandering through space and time. But the reality behind is quite differ-

ent from what it appears to the scientists and they say it is inscrutable and indescribable. If anything at all exists apart from mind, it is, according to the theory of relativity, that vast unimaginable four-dimensional continuum whose inmost activity is hidden from us. This world of space, matter and apparent movement in time is only an interpretation of one's own mind. Jeans says that the last traces of materialism have vanished and that we live in a world of pure thought. To him the one ultimate reality is mind or consciousness. The universe is more like a thought than a great machine, and in the mind that existed originally, perceiving and thinking are all the expressions of that mind's activity. He puts it as follows: "We need find no mystery of the nature of the rolling contact of our consciousness with the empty soap-bubble we call space-time, for it reduces merely to a contact between mind and a creation of mind, like the reading of a book or listening to music." It is probably unnecessary to add that on this view of things, the apparent vastness and emptiness of the universe and our own insignificant size therein, need cause us neither bewilderment nor concern. We are not terrified by the size of the structures which our own thought creates, nor by those that others imagine and describe to us. So the modern scientists have come to the conclusion that mind or consciousness is the one ultimate Reality.

Mind, as has already been described, is only a modification of matter according to the Indian philosophers. It is never consciousness. It is only a determinative faculty. The Indriyas or the senses convey the percep-

tion of the external objects to the mind, which in turn sets the Buddhi or determinative faculty to react, and along with this, the Buddhi flashes the idea of Aham or ego and the external object. If the mind were in itself conscious or self-luminous, as the Western thinkers claim it to be, it should have been able to cognise itself and the external objects at one and the same time, which it cannot. Therefore mind is not in itself conscious or self-luminous. Patanjali says; "The essence of knowledge (God) being unchangeable when the mind takes its form, it becomes conscious." When the mind comes in contact with God through Buddhi and Ahamkara, it becomes knowing for the time being and seems as if it were itself consciousness. On one side of the mind there is the external world—that which is being seen—and on the other side there is the Seer or God, and due to the presence of God who is the Supreme Consciousness itself, the power of knowledge comes to the mind. Indian philosophers, knowing that the study of the external world is insufficient datum for the establishment of the existence of God, turned their gaze inwards and became introspective, and analysing their own minds and going beyond, arrived at wonderful results. When the powers of mind are concentrated, mind becomes a powerful instrument to observe what is actually going on in the internal world and becomes self-controlled. When thus the mind's function is completely controlled, the Ultimate Reality becomes manifest. This is how the Indian sages came face to face with the Ultimate Reality which they called Brahman or God. So the knowledge gained by the analysis of

the external world alone would remain limited and one-sided so long as mind also is not studied and analysed. No doubt the Western scientists posit the existence of something like 'mind stuff', or as Bertrand Russell calls it 'neutral stuff' or as Einstein calls it 'four dimensional continuum' but they have arrived at this conclusion only as a hypothesis. Jeans says: "Primitive cosmologies pictured a Creator working in space and time, forging sun, moon and stars out of an already existing new material. Modern scientific theory compels us to think of the Creator as working outside time and space, which are parts of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvass." He also says in another place that this universe has been designed by the 'Great Architect of the universe' from the intrinsic evidence of his creation. He believes not only that the universe is designed by the Great Architect or Great Mathematician, but that it actually consists of thoughts in the mind of God, just as the terrestrial pure mathematician does not concern himself with material substance but with pure thought. Jeans thus arrives at the same conclusion as Bishop Berkley whom he quotes with approval "All the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any substance without the mind.... So long as they are actually

perceived by me, do not exist in my mind, or that of another created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit." Thus the Western scientists and philosophers hypothesise about the existence of an Eternal Spirit or God through the analysis of the external world; but as a matter of fact, because they have not seen Him face to face as the Indian sages have done, their doubts have not yet been cleared as regards the real existence of God and in many other instances, *viz.*, in regard to the nature of life, consciousness, the relation between mind and matter, the survival of bodily death, the relation between man and God and so on. For the solution of these intricate problems, then, they have to proceed on the method of the Indian Yogis or the Yogic method by which they can turn their gaze inwards, dive deep and analyse both mind and matter at one stretch in a detached way and go beyond them both as the Indian sages have done long long ago before the dawn of the scientific era, and with them they will be able to proclaim to the world that the existence of God is an established fact and that by knowing Him, everything becomes known, *i.e.*, nothing further remains to be known. Then, indeed one can say, "All the knots of heart are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and all actions come to an end by seeing Him who is both high and low."

(Concluded)


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# COURTS OF JUSTICE IN ANCIENT INDIA

*By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.*

[The following essay by Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History and Economics in Madura College, briefly deals with the kinds of courts and system of administering justice in ancient India.]

## I

“ COURT of Justice,” says Sukra, “is a place where the science of practical life in the varied interests of men are enquired into and decided according to the dictates of the Dharma Sastras.” Says Narada: “That is not a judicial assembly where there are no elders. They are not elders who do not pass a just sentence. That is not a just sentence in which there is no truth. That is not truth which is vitiated by error.” With regard to its location, Brihaspati says, “In the middle of the fortress, he should build a house with water and trees adjacent to it. Let him use for a Court of Justice a room situated on the eastern side of it, properly constituted and facing the east—the Judges facing the north and the Scribe facing the south. The King should cause gold, water and codes of sacred law to be placed in the midst of them.”

Numerous were the Courts in Ancient India. Brihaspati divides them into Moveable Courts, Stationary Courts, Courts deriving authority from the King and the Courts presided over by the King himself. Bhṛigu goes a step further and thinks of 15 kinds of Courts. But all these could be conveniently classified as State Courts and popular or arbitration courts. The State Courts themselves were three in number—the Court of the

Royal Bench, the Court of the Pradivaka and the Court of Subordinate Judges.

The Court of Royal Bench was the highest court. It was presided over by the King himself and was the highest court of appeal. This had no particular location, for it moved along with the King. But he acted only as its president. He was assisted by a number of other Judges. In fact to the ancients, the exercise of any judicial power by a single man was repugnant. “No deliberation by a single man will be successful” (Visalaksha). Manu lays down that the number of Judges should at least be three, while Brihaspati says that it should be five or seven. But the King’s influence was considerable in arriving at decisions. Brihaspati says that it was the function of the King to decide whether the case before him was true or not. As the status of the King depended upon proper administration of justice, the kings were particularly anxious to be available to the people at all times. Says Asoka, “So by me has this been arranged, at all hours, when I am eating or in the harem or in the inner apartments or even in the ranches or in the place of religious instruction or in the parks, everywhere Prativedakas are posted with instructions to report on affairs of my people.” The ‘chain of justice’ during the time of

Jahangir also reminds us of the same enthusiasm of the monarch to be easily accessible to the people. The members of the Judicial Assembly were known as Sabhyas. The Sabhyas were chosen for their knowledge, experience and integrity. Besides the Sabhyas, there were always present in the King's Court several wise men whose advice the King could take if necessary. The Chief Priest, for example, advised the king in the exercise of his prerogative of mercy. Says Narada, "As a hunter traces the vestiges of wounded deer in a thicket by the drops of blood, even so let him trace justice."

In South India the King was advised by several Councils, among which the Judicial Council was the most important. According to the Puram, the observance of Dharma was the very basis of administration. Failure to administer proper justice meant death to the King. The Kural prescribes :—

Search out, to no one favour show,  
with heart that Justice loves  
Consult, then act ; this is the rule  
that right approves.

Hard of access, nought searching  
out, with partial hand

The King who rules, shall sink and  
perish from the land.

A just King was looked upon with great reverence as a representative of God on earth. It is said, "If the King who is easily accessible to his citizens and acts in accordance with the established Law of the land would but desire, rains will instantaneously pour down."

Such was the position of the King as the head of the State's judiciary. Though his was the highest court of appeal, it had also original jurisdic-

tion. As pointed out earlier, justice was not delayed by formal regulations. If a man was injured near the palace, he had every right to proceed directly to the King and report the matter. No Judge could say that a particular case was beyond his jurisdiction. Nor could he insist on a particular case being tried by him. In fact in Karikala's time we have the incident of two Brahmins withdrawing their case from the King's Court on the ground that he was too young and inexperienced to try the case.

Next only in importance to the Court of Royal Bench was the court presided over by the Chief Judge. While the King's Court could be held wherever he was, this court was stationary. Says Manu, "If the King does not personally investigate the suits, then let him appoint a learned Brahmin to try them." The Pradvivaka naturally occupied a very high position. As an experienced surgeon extracts a dart by means of surgical instruments, even so the Chief Judge must extract the dart of iniquity from the law suit. His counterpart can be seen to-day in the Chief Judge of every High Court. He was also assisted by other Judges and also by assessors. Generally the King delegated his authority to the Pradvivaka by handing over to him the royal seal. We are not sure whether there was any appeal to the King from the Court of Pradvivaka. But seeing the extreme indulgence given to the accused in the matter of appeals, it is likely that appeals were allowed now and then from his courts.

Numerous were the smaller courts created by the State and controlled

by the Mantri-parishad. These were known as Janapada, Sanohi, Sangrahana, Dronamukha and Sthaniya. Each of these courts was presided over by three Ministers of Law and three Directors. These would resemble our Munsiff and Magistrate Courts, and were located in important cities. Most of these courts appear to have been public and in fact Brihaspati defines the court as 'four faced Brahman'.

The courts enumerated above had both civil and criminal jurisdiction. To them the difference between a civil court and a criminal court was unknown. Kautilya<sup>1</sup> speaks of two classes of courts in his Artha Sastra, namely, Dharma Sthaneya and Kantaka Sodhana. Both these had criminal and civil jurisdiction. The former administered civil and criminal justice in respect of ordinary matters. The Kantaka Sodhana which consists of three Commissioners exercised special jurisdiction over matters of commerce, industry and preservation of peace. Even to-day it is sometimes found that it would be better in the interest of justice if the same judge had both the powers. Many civil cases are found on careful analysis to be based on motives criminal.

## II

More important than the State Courts were the Popular Courts which were numerous in number and varied in kind. Owing to lack of means of communication, the State Courts were not easily accessible to the people. Naturally a major portion of the judicial work was done by these local courts which met either in a temple

or under a Banyan tree. The Gramani or the village Headman himself had judicial powers. He had the power of banishing from the village any person suspected of theft or adultery. In Kulavaka Jataka the Headman of the village is seen mourning the loss of fines paid by the drunkards whose character was improved by the Bodhisattva. He was assisted in the work by Grama Vriddhas (old and experienced men of the village). Elphinstone thus describes the procedure in a suit for the recovery of debt. "If a complaint was made to a Patel, he would send for the person complained of, and if he admitted the debt, would interfere partly as a friend to settle the mode and time of payment. If the debt were disputed, and he and his Kulkarni could not by their own influence or sagacity effect a settlement to the satisfaction of both the parties, the Patel assembled a Panchayat of inhabitants of the village, who enquired into the matter with very little form and decided as they thought best; but this decision could not take place without the previous consent of the parties . . . . ." The method of administering criminal justice was stated in My Chaplin's Report on the Deccan (1824) as follows: "Patels exercised formerly, without any defined limits to their authority, the power of slightly punishing for all minor offences, such as abusive language, petty assaults and trespasses. The punishment seldom went beyond a few blows with the open hand or confinement for a couple of days in the village choultry, the prisoner paying subsistence money to the Havaladar or peon who was placed over

<sup>1</sup> Kautilya also speaks of separate courts for preserving the purity of officials.



him<sup>2</sup>". But as the Gramani had numerous executive functions, he very rarely dealt with judicial matters. These were generally decided by the popular courts known as the Kula, the Pooga, the Sreni and the Sabha. Says Brihaspati, "Relatives, companies of artisans, assemblies and other persons duly authorised by the King should decide law suits among men excepting violent offences (Sahasa)." The ancients insisted on every case being tried by only those qualified to investigate the case. A case against an artisan was to be tried only by a court formed among the artisans, while a case against a forester had to be tried only by men of his own profession.

Says Sukra : "Among these local courts, the largest appears to have been the Pooga. It was cosmopolitan in its constitution, consisting as it did of Judges from various communities or professions resident in the village." "Thus," says Mukerjee in his *Local Government in Ancient India*, "the Pooga was the highest court, because it was numerically the largest assembly, on which were represented not merely the different castes, as in the Sreni, but also the interests of different crafts, trades or occupations in the village or township." This court appears to have had appellate authority too; for according to Narada and Yajñavalkya, the unsuccessful parties could carry their complainants from the Kula to the Pooga and if they were not satisfied with the award of the Pooga, they could seek the help of the State Courts. A Sreni was a court intended mainly for the mercantile class.

Each profession appears to have had a Sreni of its own in which disputes and professional jealousies were either settled or compromised. A Sreni was not a communal organisation, for it was composed of men belonging to different castes, but pursuing the same occupation.

Kula was the lowest court. It was composed of members of one particular community and appears to have been concerned only with very minor offences of a communal nature. A Kula can better be called an arbitration court and its jurisdiction was only over the kinsmen of the Judges. All these courts were based on the principle that local men alone knew about the local affairs to meet out justice.

A very interesting feature of ancient Indian judicature is the provision for appeals from the decisions of the various courts. This provision was particularly insisted upon in the republican constitutions. In fact the right of the individual was safeguarded in a manner unparalleled in the history of the world. We learn from *Atthakatha* that a criminal was at first sent for trial to the officers called 'Vinichiya mahamatta'. If the accused was found innocent, they acquitted him, but if he was guilty in their opinion, they could not punish him, but had to send him to the next higher tribunal, that of the Voharikas. They too could acquit the accused, if they found him innocent but had to send him to the next higher tribunal, viz., that of the Suttadhara, if they considered him guilty. There were three other tribunals with similar functions, viz., those of *Atthakulaka*, *Senapati* and *Uparaja*, each of which could acquit the accused if

<sup>2</sup>John Mathai : *Village Government in British India*.

innocent, but had to send him to the next higher tribunal if found guilty. The last tribunal, viz., that of the Raja had alone the right to convict the accused, and in awarding punishment, he was guided by the 'Paveni pustaka' or the Book of Precedents<sup>1</sup>. It should however be pointed out that indiscriminate appeal was effectively checked by the ruling that if an appeal was lost, the appellant must pay double of what he was fined by the lower court.

Except perhaps in the case of the Kula, in all other courts, numerous officers other than the Judges were present. Among them the Accountant was the most important. Brihaspati lays down that the Accountant was expected to be well-versed in grammar, reckoning and numerous scripts. Katyayana lays down that these were to be selected only from among the Vaisyas. Vyasa goes a step further and insists upon the Accountant being an adept in astronomy. Equally responsible and onerous was the position of the Accountant in South India. Besides the qualifications mentioned above, the Ganaka or the Kanakkan of South India was expected to have some judicial talents. He is referred to in

<sup>1</sup> Majumdar's Corporate life in Ancient India.

one of the Chola inscriptions as "Trairajya Ghatika Madhyasta." He received for maintenance four 'Nali' of paddy every day and seven Kalanja of pure gold every year and a pair of cloth. In presenting his accounts, he was required to undergo the ordeal of holding red-hot iron in his hand. One who was truthful, honest and patient, was appointed Lekhaka. He was expected to have a good vocabulary and good handwriting. The Sadhyapala appears to have been chosen from among the Sudras. Says Vyasa, "A stout Sudra whose ancestors were employed in that office acting under the orders of the Judges should be made Sadhyapala to obtain material for the trial." The Court Hall in the Mogul period was filled with the law officers of the Crown. Prominent among them were experts in Canon Law (Quazis), Judges of Common Law (Adies), Theologians (Ulema), Jurists learned in precedents (Fatawah), the Superintendent of the Law Court (Daroghah-i-Adalat) and the city police officer (Kotwal). The Jail Guards appear to have been men of great respectability and their duties were highly responsible. They were expected to treat the prisoners with kindness and to attend to their wants.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, New Delhi.

The Delhi Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission was started in May, 1927. The permanent house of the Ashrama at New Delhi (Ibbetson Road) accommodates the Monastery, the Dispensary, the Library

and the Free Reading Room and the Office of the Institution. The Free Tuberculosis Clinic is located in a rented building in the old city at Daryaganj near Edward Park, Delhi.

A short account of the activities of the Mission during 1936 and 1937 is given below :

(1) *Religious Preaching*.—Religious classes and discourses, numbering about 265 in 1936 and 370 in 1937, besides Bhajans, were held at the Ashrama and in different parts of New and Old Delhi. Lectures (in Hindi, Bengali and English) on philosophical, religious and cultural subjects, numbering 38 in 1936 and 51 in 1937, were also delivered by Swami Sharvananda and others in Delhi, Karachi and many other places.

(2) *The Library and the Free Reading Room*.—The Library contained 824 books in 1936 and 919 books at the end of 1937. They form a well-chosen collection in English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali. The total number of books issued were 722 in 1936 and 920 in 1937. Some 25 Periodicals (including two English dailies) were available in the Reading Room. It is open every evening to the general public.

(3) *Out-door General Dispensary*.—A resident doctor who is a passed Homeopath attends the Dispensary every morning and evening (except on Sundays when only very urgent cases are attended to). The total attendance was 17630 in 1936 and 24632 in 1937.

(4) *The Out-door Free Tuberculosis Clinic*.—The Clinic was started in 1933 and serves the poor in general, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. The patients are treated with modern scientific appliances, including ultra-violet ray exposure, by the eminent medical staff who have volunteered their services to the institution. It is open every morning (except on Sundays) from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The total attendance of patients was 6,934 in 1936 and 11,363 in 1937.

The institution is maintained by subscriptions and donations from the public bodies and private individuals.

To stabilise this useful institution a permanent house with sufficient funds is absolutely necessary. It is hoped that the benevolent public will do their utmost for the poor by helping this useful institution. The house itself will cost about Rs. 25,000.

(5) *Anniversary Celebrations*.—The

Ashram held the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary in a fitting manner. Annual celebrations of the birth-days of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Krishna, Sri Chaitanya, Buddha, Christ, etc., are also held.

### Purna Kumbha Mela

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram at Kankhal, Hardwar proposes to adopt the following programme of relief work during the Purna Kumbha Mela at Hardwar during the March and April 1938 :

1. The Sevashram at Kankhal, with its indoor and outdoor departments, will become the main centre under which temporary relief branches will be opened in different parts of the Mela with a view to give medical aid to the suffering pilgrims. These patients will be accommodated in the temporary huts to be constructed by the Sevashram.

2. The Sevashram at Kankhal will maintain a touring relief department, the doctors and workers of which will go round, from camp to camp, to find out those patients who will be unable to move and come to our centre. Such cases, when necessary, will be removed to the main centre at Kankhal or to some other Hospital near by.

3. We shall have to make provision for the lodging and boarding of the honorary medical officers and other workers as also of a limited number of persons who have no place to go to.

For these we require at least Rs. 5,000 in cash and a good quantity of medicines, clothing, food-stuffs, and other necessities, in addition to ten qualified medical officers, five compounders and several workers. We earnestly hope that on such an august occasion like this all the necessary help will be forthcoming from the generous public for the relief of the suffering and helpless pilgrims.

Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Asimananda, Hony. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, P. O. Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur, U.P.

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